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THE

MAGI KINGS.



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THE JOURNEY
OF
THE MAGI KINGS

FROM
"The Life of the Blessed Virgin"
AFTER THE MEDITATIONS OF
SISTER ANNE CATHERINE EMMERICH

Translated from the French by
GEORGE RICHARDSON

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INTRODUCTION.

It is now more than sixty years since Sister Emmerich, from whose *Life of the Blessed Virgin* this account of the Three Kings is extracted, died. It seems strange that neither that interesting little book, nor the *Life of our Lord*, a much larger work by the same author, should have been before this time translated into English.

Sister Anne Catherine Emmerich was born on the 8th of September, 1774, and died on the 9th of February, 1824. She was one of those few persons favoured by our Lord with the marks of His sacred wounds, called the *Stigmata*, or *Vulnus divinum*.

These marks were conferred by our Lord upon St. Francis of Assisi, upon St. Bridget, St. Gertrude, St. Mechtild, St. Catherine of Sienna, St. Magdalen of Pazzi, and several

others. In the case of the great St. Francis, a festival of the Church was established to commemorate them, and they have always been regarded with singular veneration by Catholics, as indicating great sanctity in those who bore them. The Church is often very slow in acknowledging the merits of the Saints; so we do not as yet know whether Sister Emmerich may be distinguished from so many others of her children, who have practised heroic sanctity.

These miraculous marks have been examined by the curiosity of the medical profession. They have classed them with the diseases to which humanity is sometimes subjected, under a scientific name,—hoping thus to be excused the trouble of understanding them, and the responsibility of rejecting them. They have not, however, advanced one step towards their explanation,—as, indeed, they are inexplicable, except by the power and mercy of God.

The most extraordinary faculty to be remarked in Sister Emmerich is the wonderful

power which she possessed — perhaps in a higher degree than is recorded of any of the Saints—of distinguishing things consecrated by the finger of the Church, or as coming from her Saints. This is referred to in a note towards the end of this short history. From her earliest youth, she had the wonderful faculty, which was possessed also by St. Sibylline of Pavia, Ida of Louvain, and Ursula Benincasa, of distinguishing in things both natural and spiritual the good from the bad, the sacred from the profane, the blessed from the cursed. Wandering in the fields when but a child, she would gather wholesome herbs, the virtues of which were known only to herself, and would reject all poisonous herbs, especially such as were used in superstitious practices. If she came to a place where any great sin had been committed, she would avoid it, and pray and do penance ; and in places which had been blessed or sanctified she would feel happy, and render thanks to God. In the relics of the Saints she recognised, not only

the full particulars of the life of the Saint, but also the history of the relic, and of the various places in which it had been kept. In connection with this, our attention is called to another remarkable religious instinct, shewn by the way in which she was affected by the festivals of the Church. When the moment of transition came, she would turn from the contemplation of the mysteries of the Saint of the day to those of the following, with joy or sorrow as the next day's festival required. She has told us that there are fruits and benefits, to be collected by each one of us, in the garden of the Church, and which we must gather as the days roll past, or they will be lost to us; and we shall hereafter have to account for the neglect of blessings so profusely provided in the garden of the Church for our use;—just as we lose the flowers and the fruits of the year by neglecting to gather them in their appointed seasons.

She was also especially devoted to the souls

in purgatory. Often when but a girl, she would be awakened from her sleep by the holy souls, and in the coldest nights of winter she would go, accompanied by troops of these souls, to pray on the way of the cross which led to Coesfield.

But nothing tends so much to raise our confidence in the narratives of Sister Emmerich as the wonderful conformity of them all to the Scripture, and to what we at once recognise as suitable to the character of the sacred person whose history she gives us. Let us take for instance this description of our Blessed Lady :

“The cheeks of the Blessed Virgin are pale and rigid ; her eyes are red with tears. It is impossible to express how full of simplicity and dignity she appeared. She has not ceased to wander since yesterday, in her anguish, across the valley of Josaphat, and through the streets of Jerusalem ; and, notwithstanding, there is neither derangement, nor disorder in

her dress—there is not a fold in her clothing which does not breathe of sanctity. Everything about her is simple, dignified, full of purity and innocence. She looks majestically around her, and the folds of her veil, when she slightly turns her head, have a singular beauty. Her movements are without violence, and in the midst of the most poignant grief all her behaviour is simple and calm. Her robe is wet with the dew of night, and with the abundant tears which she has shed; but everything remains clean and well arranged in her dress. She is beautiful with a beauty inexpressible and altogether supernatural,—a beauty which consists of ineffable purity, simplicity, majesty, and sanctity.”

Again, on the appearance of our Lord to his blessed Mother, first, before all others, she says :

“At the moment when the angel entered into the sepulchre, and the earth trembled, the risen Saviour appeared to his Mother on

Calvary. He was marvellously beautiful and brilliant. His vestment, like a cloak, floated behind, and seemed of a light blue, like smoke seen in the rays of the sun. His wounds were large and resplendent,—one could pass a finger through those of the hands. Rays came from the middle of the hands to the end of the fingers. The souls of the Patriarchs, who accompanied our Lord, bowed before the Mother of Jesus. He shewed her His wounds, and as she prostrated herself on the ground to kiss His feet, He took her by the hand, raised her, and disappeared."

Then we readily concur in the reason which she gives us for Almighty God's refusing to the early Christians such a knowledge as we now possess of the high prerogatives of the Blessed Virgin :

"God hath left everything which concerns her death, her tomb, her assumption into heaven, solely an object of uncertain tradition, so as not to give entrance into Christianity of

the pagan sentiment, so powerful at this time ;
—for men would easily have been deceived, so as
to adore Mary as a goddess.”

And it is thus throughout all the revelations
of Sister Emmerich,—not in one word do they
contradict the Scripture narrative, but they
enable us more completely to understand pas-
sages which have before appeared obscure, and
to appreciate with deeper conviction the mar-
vellous statements of the Gospels.

In the memorials of her life which have
already appeared, her troubles with the very
imperfect nuns in her convent, and their
inability at all to understand her, have been
very fully dwelt upon. This is how she bore
them :

“I was never more rich interiorly. My
soul was inundated with joy. I had only a
chair without a seat, and another without a
back, in my cell ; and, notwithstanding, it was
for me so full and so magnificent that I
seemed to see the whole of heaven. At night,

attracted by the love and mercy of God, I poured forth my soul in ardent words, full of an affectionate familiarity, as I was accustomed to do from my childhood. The sisters watched me, and accused me of impropriety and rashness with regard to God. Once I answered that it appeared to me more rash to receive the Body of our Lord without being completely familiar with Him, and I was severely reprimanded. In the midst of all this I lived at peace with God and all creatures. When I worked in the garden, the birds would come to me, and perch on my head, or my shoulders, and we sang together the praises of the Most High."

It was ascertained by Brentano, who took down her meditations in writing, by exact and daily observations, continued during four years, and also by the timid statements which she could not refuse to make, that during her whole life, and especially during her residence in the convent, a great part of her maladies

and sufferings came from her taking upon herself the sufferings of others. Sometimes she would ask to be afflicted by the sickness of some person who did not suffer patiently, and relieved her of all the evils, or a part of them, by taking them upon herself. Thus, wishing to expiate some sin, or to put an end to some suffering, she offered herself to God, and the Lord accepted her sacrifice, allowed her the expiation in union with the merits of his passion, and in the form of some malady, corresponding to the sin which she wished to efface. Thus she had to support her own diseases and the troubles of others, which she took upon herself; grief, to expiate even the faults and negligences of portions of the Christian family; and frequently sufferings of satisfaction for the souls in purgatory.

At the end of the ecclesiastical year of 1823, she had for the last time a vision relative to the rendering the accounts of that year. Divers symbols shewed her the

negligences of the Church militant and its servants. She saw how many graces had not been cultivated or gathered,—how many had been deplorably lost. It was explained to her that the Redeemer has placed every year in the garden of the Church a complete treasure of His merits, to satisfy all wants and all expiations; that graces neglected, dissipated, or lost,—graces sufficient to raise the most fallen, or to deliver the most forgotten souls in purgatory,—would have to be accounted for with the extremest rigour; and that the Church militant was punished for these negligences and infidelities of her children, by the oppression of her enemies or by temporal humiliations. Such revelations raised to a very high degree her love for the Church, her mother. She passed days and nights in praying for her, in offering to God with continual groans the merits of Jesus Christ, and in asking his mercy. In short, she mustered all her courage, and offered to take upon herself the fault and the punishment, like a

child who presents himself before the throne of a king to submit to the judgment given against his mother.

It was then said to her, "See how full you are of wretchedness, you, who would satisfy for others;" and she saw herself with terror a sorrowful and humiliating picture, full of infinite imperfections. But the impetuosity of her love rose with still greater energy in these words: "Yes, I am full of miseries and sins; but I am your bride. O my Lord and my Saviour, my faith in you, and in the redemption which comes by you, covers all my sins with your royal mantle. I will not leave you, till you accept my sacrifice; for the abundant treasure of your merits is not closed to any of your faithful." At the end, her prayer became so singularly energetic that it seemed to human ears like a quarrel or a strife with God, to which the strength of her audacious love carried her.

Another remarkable part of the revelations of Sister Emmerich is her description of her

travels to distant countries during her visions. Similar things are related of St. Ledwine and other Saints. The end of her daily pilgrimages was always the Holy Land, which she saw sometimes in its actual condition, sometimes in that in which it existed at different epochs of sacred history. Another thing which distinguished her from other persons of the same category was the singular grace of a complete intuition of the history of Old and New Testaments, of all the personages of the Holy Family, and of all the Saints towards whom the eyes of her soul were directed. She saw the signification of all the feast-days of the ecclesiastical year, both from the devotional and the historical point of view; she saw and recounted day by day, with details of names, of places, and persons, the festivals, the manners, and the miracles of the three years of the ministry of Jesus up to the Ascension, and the history of the Apostles for some weeks after the descent of the Holy Ghost. She did not, however, attribute to her visions any historical authority.

She knew nothing but the Catechism, the popular Bible-history, the Gospels for Sundays and holidays, and the Calendar, which appeared in her estimation the richest and most profound book. She had never read the Old or New Testament. On one occasion she saw our Saviour on the Eastern frontier of the Promised Land, in a small city to the north of a more important place called Cedar. He was there teaching on the occasion of a marriage the importance and the sanctity of marriage. "In this vision," said the Sister, "I was one of the assistants, and I went about with them. The discourse of our Saviour appeared to me so beautiful, so important and so applicable to our miserable times, that I cried out in my heart, 'Ah, why was this not written, why is there not here some disciple to write, that all the world may know it?' Then my heavenly Bridegroom turned all at once to me, and said something in these words: 'I cultivate the vine where it bears fruit; if this had been

written, it would have been neglected, or wrongly interpreted, like a great part of the Scriptures. The written law is not more followed because it is written. Everything is written in the children of the Church who believe, who hope, who love.”

This short account from the *Life of Our Lady* by Sister Emmerich would be incomplete if we omitted to refer to the remarkable manner in which with very ample details she has brought out in these lives the wonderful sanctity and purity of St. Joachim and St. Anne. When we remember that to their singular graces we owe the wonderful mystery of the Immaculate Conception of our dear Mother—that their persevering penance before this event had rendered them most pure in God’s sight, perhaps even as pure as if they had been dwellers in Paradise before the fall of our first parents, and that in such purity they became the parents of the Blessed Virgin,—it is scarcely too much for us to hope that greater devotion to these eminent Saints may spring up

from the writings of Sister Emmerich in the hearts of all those who read with pleasure and rely with confidence on her words.

Lastly, although we have not as yet the highest confirmation of the writings of Sister Emmerich, still her sanctity and revelations have received the full approbation of several eminent and learned Bishops of the Catholic Church, remarkable for their piety; and her writings have also been received with evident joy and satisfaction by large numbers of the faithful abroad. They are also extensively read in England, and are quoted with evident pleasure and approval by many of our Catholic authors whose works are most highly esteemed.

THE JOURNEY OF THE MAGI KINGS.

THE BIRTH OF CHRIST IS ANNOUNCED TO THE MAGI KINGS.

"I SAW at the hour of the birth of Jesus a marvellous apparition, which was seen by the Magi Kings. They were worshippers of the stars, and had, on a mountain, a tower in pyramidal form; there one of them always remained with several priests to observe the stars. They used to write down their observations, and communicate them to each other. On this night, I fancy I saw two of the Magi Kings on this tower. The third, who dwelt to the east of the Caspian Sea, was not with them. They always observed a particular constellation. In it they saw from time to time changes in these apparitions in the sky.

To-night I saw the image which they were observing. It was not in one star that they saw this, but in a figure composed of several stars. Among these there seemed to be a movement taking place. They saw a beautiful rainbow above the crescent of the moon; upon this rainbow a Virgin was seated. Her left knee was slightly elevated, her right knee was more extended, and the foot rested upon the crescent. On the left side of the Virgin, above the rainbow, there was a vine branch, and on the right side a cluster of ears of wheat. I saw before the Virgin the figure of a chalice appear to rise up, similar to that which was used at the last supper. I observed an Infant come forth from the chalice, and above the infant a luminous disk, like an empty monstrance, from which shone forth rays like ears of corn. This made me think of the Blessed Sacrament. From the right side of the Infant a branch came forth, at the extremity of which was shewn, as it were a flower, an octagonal church, having a

large golden door and two small side doors. The Virgin with her right hand caused the chalice, the Infant, and the host to enter into the Church, of which I saw the interior, and which seemed to me then very large. At the bottom was a vision of the Blessed Trinity. Then the church was transformed into a brilliant city, like a picture of the heavenly Jerusalem. As I was gazing into the interior of the church alluded to, I saw vision upon vision, each vision, so to speak, evolved from the previous one; but I do not recollect in what order, nor do I recollect in what manner, the Magi Kings were told that the Infant was born in Judæa. One of the Kings, who lived at a great distance, saw the apparition at the same hour as the others. The Kings experienced inexpressible joy. They collected together their treasures and their presents, and set forward on their journey. It was only at the expiration of some days that they met together.

“During the last days which preceded the

birth of Christ, I saw them in their large observatory, where they had several visions. How great was the mercy of God towards the pagans ! ”

“ Do you know whence this prophecy came to the Magi Kings ? ”

“ I can only say very little, for all is not present to my mind at once. Five hundred years before the birth of the Messiah (Elias lived about 800 years before Jesus Christ) the ancestors of the three Kings were rich and powerful. They were more so than their descendants, for their possessions were more extensive, and their property was less divided. At that time, too, they also lived in tents, unlike their ancestor, to the east of the Caspian Sea, whose city I see before me now ; it has foundations of stone on which pavilions are spread, for it is situated near the sea, which often overflows. There are very lofty mountains. I see two seas— one on the right and the other on the left. The chiefs of this race were even then

worshippers of the stars, but they had also in their country an abominable religious practice. They sacrificed old men, men who were deformed, and also infants; and what was most horrible, these infants, dressed in white, were thrown into cauldrons, and boiled alive. But all this was ultimately abolished. It was to these blind pagans that God, so long beforehand, announced the birth of the Saviour. These princes had three daughters versed in the knowledge of the stars. All three received at the same time the spirit of prophecy, and knew by a vision that a star should come forth from Jacob, and that a Virgin should bring forth the Saviour. They wore long mantles, traversed the country round, preached the reformation of manners, and announced that emissaries of the Redeemer would come some day, and bring to these people the worship of the true God. They made many prophecies having reference even to our own times, and times still more distant. Whereupon the fathers of these virgins erected a

temple to the future Mother of God to the south of the sea, on a spot where their countries adjoined, and where they were wont to offer sacrifices. The prophecy of the three virgins told especially of a constellation, and of several changes which were seen in it. Then commenced the observations by these people of the constellation from the top of a mountain; and from the observations which they made they continually changed something in their temple, their worship and their ornaments. The veil of this temple was sometimes blue, sometimes red or yellow, or of some other colour. What seemed to me remarkable was that they altered their weekly festival-day to Saturday. It had before been on the Friday."

THE JOURNEY OF THE THREE MAGI KINGS TO
BETHLEHEM.

"I have already said how I saw the birth of Jesus Christ announced to the three Kings on Christmas night.* I saw Mensor and Sair; they were in the country of the former, and were observing the stars. All their preparations were made for the journey. They observed the star of Jacob from the top of a pyramidal tower. The star had a tail, and expanded, so to say, before their eyes, and they saw a beautiful Virgin, before whom appeared a shining Infant. A branch came from the right side of the Infant, and at the end of this appeared, like a flower, a little turret with several entrances, which ended by becoming a city. Immediately after this apparition, the two set out on their journey. Theokeno, the third, dwelt two days' journey further east. He also saw the same things at the same hour, and departed at once in all haste

* See *infra*.

to join his two friends, which he did very soon.

“I fell asleep with a great desire to be in the grotto of the crib near the Mother of God, in order that she might give me the Infant Jesus to hold for some time in my arms, and to press to my heart; and I actually went there. Joseph was asleep in the corner, near the door, with his head on his right arm. Mary was awake. She was sitting in her accustomed place near the crib, and held upon her breast the little Jesus, covered with a veil. I knelt down and adored, with a burning desire to see the child. Ah, she knew it well. She knows and listens to all we ask of her, with a goodness so touching, when we pray to her with sincere faith; but she was silent and recollected; she reverently adored Him Whose Mother she was, and she did not give me the Infant, because she was suckling Him, as I believe. In her place I should have done the same. My desire kept increasing, and mingled with that of all the

souls who sigh after the Infant Jesus. But this ardent desire for our Saviour was by no means so pure, so simple, and so sincere as in the heart of the good Kings of the East, who in the person of their ancestors had waited for ages, believing, hoping, loving. Therefore my desire turned towards them. When I had ceased to adore, I glided respectfully out of the grotto of the crib, and was conducted by a long road to the cortège of the three Kings. On my way, I saw many countries, dwellings, and people, their manners and customs, and also something of their worship. I will recount, as well as I can, all that I remember.

“I was led into the East, into a country which I had never before seen. It was almost everywhere barren and sandy. Small colonies of men dwelt near the hills in cabins made of the boughs of trees—isolated families of from five to eight persons. The roofs, also made of branches, leaned against the hill, in which the dwellings were hollowed out. This

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country produced scarcely anything, — only bushes, and here and there a little tree with buds, from which they drew out a white wool. I saw also some larger trees, under which they placed their idols. The men there were very savage; they seemed in general to live on raw flesh, especially on that of birds, and to live in part by plunder. They were of a copper colour with red hair like the fur of a fox. They were of small stature,—thick-set, more inclined to be stout than lean, but nevertheless clever, active, and energetic. Amongst them I saw neither domestic animals nor flocks of sheep. These people manufactured a sort of coverlets, with fine wool, which they collected from little trees. They made with this wool long cords as thick as the finger, which they afterwards wove into large bands of cloth; when they had produced a certain number, they placed upon their heads large rolls of these coverlets, and went to a city to sell them. I saw also in several places their idols under large trees. These

idols had a bull's head and horns, and a large mouth. In the body were round hollows, and a large opening in which they made a fire to burn the offerings which were placed in the smaller openings. Round each of the trees upon which the idols were placed, there were other animals on small columns of stone. There were also birds, dragons, and a figure which had three dogs' heads, and the tail of a serpent coiled round.

"At the commencement of my journey, I had the notion that there was on my right a large body of water, from which I was going away further and further. Beyond this country, of which I have been speaking, the road seemed always ascending, and I passed over the top of a mountain of white sand, and where lay a great quantity of little stones, black and shining, broken like pieces of pot or shells. On the other side I descended into a country covered with trees, which seemed ranged in regular order. Some of these trees had scaly trunks, and leaves of

an extraordinary size. They were also of pyramidal form, with large and beautiful flowers. The last mentioned trees had leaves of a yellowish green and branches with buds. I saw also trees with shining, heart-shaped leaves. I arrived at length at a country of pasture-land, which extended till lost to view among the hills. The whole country was filled with innumerable flocks. The vine grew round the hills, and was cultivated there. There were rows of vine-plants in terraces, with small hedges of branches to protect them. The owners of these flocks dwelt in tents, whose entrances were closed with light hurdles. These tents were formed of cloth made of white wool, which was manufactured by the savage race through which I had passed. There was in the centre a large tent, surrounded by a number of small ones. These flocks, separated according to their kinds, wandered through these extensive pastures, which were divided by thick bushes like underwood. I saw that their flocks

were of different kinds. There were sheep whose wool hung in large flocks, and which had long woolly tails ; there were very nimble animals, with horns like goats, they were as large as calves ; others, as large as horses, ran about free in the meadows. I saw also troops of camels and animals of the same kind with two humps. In this enclosed space I saw also white and spotted elephants ; they were tame and used for domestic purposes.

“This vision was interrupted three times, but it returned at different periods. These flocks of animals and the pastures seemed to belong to one of the three Kings already on his journey—I believe to Mensor and his family. They were confided to the care of a lower class of shepherds, who wore jackets reaching to the knees, something after the fashion of our country-people, only more close-fitting. The chief shepherd having departed on his long journey, all the flocks were inspected by superintendents, and the

lower class of shepherds had to give an exact account of them, and I saw from time to time men with long cloaks come and take an account of all. They came into a large tent in the centre, and there they caused the flocks to pass between that and the smaller tents. They counted and examined the animals. Those who counted them had in their hands a sort of tablet, — of what material I know not, — on which they wrote something. I said to myself, Oh that our Bishops would examine with the same diligence the flocks confided to the pastors of the second order!

“When after this last interruption I returned to the country of pastures, it was night; a profound silence reigned everywhere. The greater number of the shepherds were sleeping under little tents; a few only were watching, and going about among the flocks, which were sleeping, divided according to their kind, in large separate enclosures. As for myself, I beheld with

tender emotion these troops of animals, sleeping in peace, for I remembered that they belonged to those men who, ceasing to contemplate the immense azure pastures of heaven strewn with innumerable stars, were gone at the call of their Almighty Creator, recognising in Him their Shepherd like these faithful sheep, to follow his voice with more obedience than the sheep of this world follow that of their earthly pastors; and, as I beheld the shepherds in their watch look more frequently at the stars of heaven than at the flocks confided to their care, I said to myself, 'They have good reason to turn their eyes with astonishment and gratitude towards the heaven, where for ages their ancestors, persevering in expectation and prayer, have never ceased to turn their eyes. The good shepherd who seeks the lost sheep, sleeps not till he has found it and brought it back; thus also has the Father Who is in heaven just done—the true pastor of these innumerable flocks of stars, scattered through infinite space. Man,

to whom He had submitted the earth, having sinned, and the earth having been cursed by Him in punishment of the crime, He has gone to seek this fallen man, and the earth his dwelling place, like the lost sheep. He has sent His only Son to become man, to reclaim this lost sheep, to take upon Him all his sins, as the Lamb of God, and by dying to satisfy the divine justice. And this coming of the promised Redeemer has just taken place. The Kings of this country, led by a star, set forth on the previous night to go and render their homage to the new-born Saviour; and therefore, those who watch over their flocks regard with emotion the heavenly pastures, and pray; for the Shepherd of shepherds has descended from heaven, and it is to shepherds he has first announced his coming.'

"Whilst I was meditating thus and regarding the immense plain, the silence of the night was interrupted by the noise of a cavalcade arriving in great haste. It was a

troop of men, mounted on camels. The cortège, passing by the side of the reposing flocks, quickly directed its course to the principal tent in the shepherds' encampment. Some sleeping camels here and there awakened, and turned their long necks to the cortège. One could hear the bleating of the sheep, troubled in their slumbers. Some of the newly arrived dismounted, and awakened the shepherds, who were sleeping in their tents; the watchers nearest to them spoke to the newly arrived. Soon all were afoot, and, moving about among the travellers, they conversed together, looking up to the heavens and observing the stars. They spoke of a star, and of an apparition in the heavens which had disappeared; I, too, was unable to see it. It was the cortège of Theokeno, the third of the Magi Kings, who lived the furthest away. He had seen in his own country the same sign in the heavens as the others, and he had at once set out on his journey. He enquired how far Mensor and

Sair would be in advance, and if they could still see the star which they had taken as their guide. When they had received the required intelligence, the cortège continued its journey without staying longer. It was in this place that the three Kings, who dwelt a considerable distance from each other, were accustomed to meet to observe the stars ; and the tower in form of a pyramid, from which they made their observations, was in the neighbourhood. Theokeno was one of the three who dwelt at the greatest distance. He lived below the country which Abraham had formerly inhabited, and around which all the three were established.

“ In the intervals between the visions, which I had at three separate times during the day, on what passed on the large plain of the flocks, several things were shewn me relating to the country where Abraham lived. I have forgotten the greater part. At one time I saw at a great distance the mountain on which Abraham desired to sacrifice his son

Isaac ; at another time I saw most distinctly, though at a good distance from here, the adventures of Agar and Ishmael in the desert. Abraham's first place of residence was at a great height, and the country of the three Kings, which lay around, was lower. At one of the sides of the mountain of Abraham, near the bottom of a valley, I saw Agar wandering with her son among the bushes. She seemed as if out of her mind. The child was still very young ; he had a long dress. She herself was wrapped in a long mantle, which covered her head, and under which she wore a short dress with a tight body. She placed the child under a tree near the hill, and made some marks on its forehead, on the top of the right arm, on the breast, and on the top of the left arm. I did not see the mark on the forehead ; but the others, which were made on the dress, remained visible, and seemed to be traced with a red colour. They had the form of a cross, but not of an ordinary cross ; it resembled more a Maltese

cross, having in the middle a circle, from which came four triangles which formed the cross. In the four triangles she wrote signs or letters in the form of hooks, of which I did not understand the meaning. In the circle, which was in the centre, I saw her trace two or three letters. She did all this very rapidly, with a red colour, which she seemed to have in her hand. Perhaps it was blood. She went then to a distance, lifted up her eyes to heaven, and did not turn them again to the side where her son lay. She then went away to about the distance of a gun-shot, and sat under a tree. She then heard a voice coming from heaven, and saw a spring of water under the foliage. She filled a leather bottle, returned to her son, and gave him to drink; she then led him near to the spring, where she put on him another dress above that on which she had made the marks I have mentioned. This is all I recollect of this vision. I believe that before this I twice saw Agar in the desert,

once before the birth of her son, and again as at this time with the young Ishmael.*

"On the night between the 27th and the 28th of November, at the dawn of the day, I saw the cortège of Theokeno join that of Mensor and Sair at a city in ruins. There were there long ranges of high isolated columns; square tottering towers looked over the gates; also large and beautiful statues, not stiff like those of Egypt, but in elegant

* When in 1821, Sister Emmerich related these visions concerning the three Kings, she had already described all the period of the ministry of Jesus. She had seen, amongst other things, the Saviour retire to the other side of the river Jordan after the resurrection of Lazarus, and, during an absence of sixteen weeks, visit the three Magi Kings, who on their return from Bethlehem had settled together in a country nearer than their own to the Promised Land. Mensor and Theokeno were still living at the time of this journey of Jesus. Sair, the darkest-coloured, was dead. It seemed necessary to inform the reader of these events, coming after the thirty-three years, but mentioned before, in order to render more intelligible certain things to which allusion is made in the statement that follows.

attitudes, giving them the appearance of life. The country was sandy, with many rocks. There dwelt on the ruins of this deserted city men who had the appearance of bandits. Their only clothing was the skins of animals thrown over their shoulders, and they were armed with spears. Their skin was tawny; they were small and dwarfish, but remarkably active. It seemed to me that I had already been before in this place,—perhaps during the journeys which I made in my dream to the mountain of the prophets on the banks of the Ganges. The three companions, being thus united, left this city in the early morning in all haste to continue their journey. Many of the poor inhabitants of this place joined them, attracted by the liberality of the three Kings. After the death of our Saviour Jesus Christ, the Apostle St. John sent two disciples, Saturnin * and Jonadab, the half brother of

* Sister Emmerich saw the three Kings pass by this city on the day of the feast of Saturnin, of whom she possessed a relic, and which caused her

St. Peter, to preach the gospel in this ruined city. I saw the three Kings together. The last to arrive, Theokeno, had a complexion bordering on yellow. I recognised him, as the one who, thirty-two years later, was ill in his tent when Jesus visited the three Kings, in their settlement in the neighbourhood of the Promised Land. Each of the three Kings had with him four near relatives or intimate friends. So that in the cortège there were in all fifteen persons of high rank, accompanied by a crowd of camel-drivers and servants. Among many of the young people in the cortège, who were naked to the waist, and who could jump and run with wonderful agility, I recognised Eleazer, who afterwards became a martyr, and of whom I possess a relic."

In the afternoon, as her confessor asked

to remark the connection of the Saint with this place. Some time after the writer read in the legend of St. Saturnin that he had preached the gospel in Asia as far as Media.

her again the names of the three Kings, she replied :

“Mensor, of brown complexion, the King baptised by St. Thomas after the death of the Saviour, received the baptismal name of Leander. Theokeno, the yellow, who was ill at the time of the visit of Jesus into Arabia, was baptised by the same St. Thomas under the name of Leon. The most dark-coloured, who was already dead at the time of our Saviour’s visit, was named Seir, or Sair.”

Her confessor enquired, “How, then, was he baptised?” She was not disconcerted at this question, but replied with a smile, “He was already dead, and had had the baptism of desire.” Her confessor then said to her, “I have never heard these names; how do they agree with those of Gaspard, Melchior, and Balthasar?” She replied that they were so named in reference to their character; for the first of these words signifies, *He proceeds with love*; the second, *He goes*

caressing, He approaches sweetly ; the third, He seizes promptly with his will ; He unites instantly his will with the will of God. She said this with a gracious air, indicating the significance of the names by a kind of pantomime, moving her hand over the coverlet of her bed. It is for orientalists to say in what respect these three names can be interpreted in this manner.

“ A half-day’s journey beyond this city of ruins, where were the columns and figures in stone, I remember to have met for the first time the united cortège of the three Kings. It was in a fairly fertile country. Here and there were seen the dwellings of the shepherds, constructed of black and white stones. The cortège arrived in the plain at a well, near which were many large sheds ; there were three in the middle, and many others near them. These were places of rest for travellers.

“ The whole company was divided into three groups. In each of these were five persons

of distinction, and in the midst of each of these the chief or king, who, like the head of a family, ordered and regulated everything, and apportioned their parts to each. Each of these three groups was composed of men with faces of different complexions. The tribe of Mensor had an agreeable brown colour; that of Sair was of darker brown, and that of Theokeno had a shining complexion, approaching to yellow. I saw no one of a bright black with the exception of some slaves.

“The principal personages sat on their beasts of burden, between packets covered with rugs; they had staffs in their hands. These were followed by other large beasts, a little like horses, upon which the servants and slaves sat in the midst of the luggage. As soon as they arrived, they dismounted, completely unloaded their animals, and made them drink at the well. This well was surrounded by a low embankment, on which stood a wall with three places of entrance. In this enclosure

was a reservoir of water, which was placed a little lower down. The water came from three pipes, which were closed with plugs. The reservoir was closed with a kind of lid. This was opened by a man of this city, who had joined the company. They had vessels made of skin, separated into four divisions, where four camels could drink at the same time, when they were filled with water. They were so careful of the water that they did not suffer a drop to be lost.

“The beasts were afterwards installed in uncovered enclosures, which were near the well, and where each had its place apart. They had before them troughs of stone, where the travellers made them eat the provender which they had brought with them; this consisted of large grains, something like acorns (perhaps beans). Amongst the luggage there were also large cages, hanging to the sides of the beasts of burden, in which were birds of several kinds, nearly the size of pigeons or small chickens.

These were eaten on the journey. They had in their cases of skin cakes of equal size, like tablets pressed against each other. They carried with them precious vessels of a yellow colour, covered with ornaments and precious stones, and which were something in the form of our sacred vessels, as chalices, patens, etc. They used these for drinking and for serving up their food. The borders of these vessels were frequently ornamented with red stones.

"The tribes were not dressed altogether in the same fashion. Theokeno and his retinue, as well as Mensor, wore upon their heads a sort of high cap, round which was rolled a band of white stuff. Their tunics descended to the middle of the leg. They were very simple, and had scarcely any ornaments on their breasts; they had mantles which were light, large, and very long, and which trailed behind them. Sair, the dark coloured, and his retinue, wore a kind of cap with a round top, which was trimmed with several colours and lined with white padding. They had short

cloaks, and under them buttoned tunics, which descended to the knees, and were decorated with laces and shining buttons and other ornaments. On one side of the breast they had a brilliant piece of metal in the form of a star. They all had their feet naked, placed on sandals fastened with cords, which encircled the lower part of their legs. The chiefs had at the waist short sabres or large cutlasses; they carried also purses and small boxes. There were men of fifty, forty, thirty and twenty years of age. Some had long beards, others wore them shorter. The servants and camel-drivers were much more simply dressed; many of them had only a piece of cloth, or an old coverlet.

“When the animals had quenched their thirst, and were in their stalls, and they had themselves drunk, they made a fire in the centre of the shed where they were staying. For this purpose they made use of pieces of wood, about two feet and a half long, which the poor country people had brought in bundles,

and which seemed to have been prepared beforehand for the use of travellers. They made a sort of triangular pile of wood, leaving at the side an opening to supply air. It was very cleverly arranged. I know not how they procured a light; I saw them put a piece of wood into another piece, in which they had made a hollow; they turned this about for some time, and then drew it out lighted. Thus they made their fire, and I saw them kill and roast some birds.

"The three Kings and the older men then did each for his tribe as the father of a family does for his household; they divided the portions, and presented them to every one of their people; they placed the birds, cut into pieces, on little patens or plates, and passed them round. They also filled the cups and gave each to drink. The inferior servants, among whom were some negroes, were sitting on the ground on a cloth. They waited patiently for their turn, and received also their share. I think they were slaves.

"How touching was the goodness and the simplicity of these excellent Kings! They give of everything they have to those who have come with them; they present to their mouths their golden vessels, and make them drink like children.

"I learned to-day many things concerning the three Kings; for example the names of their countries and cities; but I have almost forgotten all. I will relate what I remember.

"Mensor, the brown, was a Chaldean. His city has a name something like Acaiaia.* It is surrounded by the river like an island. He resided principally in this plain, near to his flocks. Sair, the tawny coloured, was already with him, ready to start, on the night of the Nativity. I recollect that his country

* The writer found in 1839, consequently eighteen years after this mention of Achaiaia, the following notice in the *Dictionnaire des Écoles Industrielles de France*: "Archaiacula, a fortress in the islands of the Euphrates, in Mesopotamia." We should like to establish a connection between these two names.

had a name which resembled Parthene.* A little above this country there was a lake. He and his tribe were of a very dark colour, but with red lips. He had only one city, about the same size as Munster.

"Theokeno, the white, came from Media, a more elevated country between two seas. He lived in a city of which I forget the name. It was composed of tents erected upon stone foundations. I think that Theokeno, who was the richest of these Kings, and the one who had given up most, could have proceeded to Bethlehem by a more direct route, and that he made a circuitous route to join the others. It seemed to me as if he had to pass near Babylon to join them.

"Sair lived about three days' journey from the residence of Mensor, reckoning each day's journey at twelve leagues. Theokeno was at four days' journey of the same length. Mensor and Sair had met near the dwelling-place

* This is perhaps the name of Parthia or Parthomaspe altered.

of the former, when they saw the star which announced the birth of Jesus. They set out the day following. Theokeno saw the same apparition at his home. He departed in all haste to join the two others, and met them at the city of ruins. The star which conducted them was like a round globe, and the light came out of a sort of mouth.* It always appeared to me that this globe was suspended to a luminous thread, and directed by a hand. During the journey by day I saw before them a brilliant body whose light exceeded that of the day. When I consider the length of the journey, I am astonished at the rapidity with which they accomplished it, but the animals on which they were mounted had a pace so light and even, that their progress seemed regular, rapid, and uniform, as a flight of birds of passage.

“The cortége having remained till the evening

* This expression probably occurred to her from her having often seen light come from the mouth of the Saviour and of the Saints.

in the place where I had seen them stop, the people who had joined them assisted in reloading their beasts of burden, and carried home different things which the travellers had left. Night came on when they again set out. The star was visible; it gave out a red light, like the moon at the time of a high wind. They walked for some time near their animals with heads uncovered, and recited their prayers. The road here was such that they could not go quickly. Soon after, when it became even, they remounted their animals, which had a rapid pace. Sometimes they moved slowly; they then entoned together through the night chants which were singularly expressive and affecting.

“During the night between the 29th and the 30th of November, I found myself again near the cortége of the three Kings. They always advanced during the night, following the star, which just now seemed to touch the earth with its long luminous tail. They regarded it with tranquil joy, descended from their

beasts, and conversed together. Sometimes they sang alternately a short sentence to a sweet and expressive air, the notes of which were at one time very high, at another time very low. There was something inexpressibly pathetic in these melodies, which interrupted the silence of the night, and I recognised the meaning of all that they sang. The cortége advanced in beautiful order. First came a large camel, carrying on each side boxes over which large rugs were spread. On these sat one of the chiefs, with a sword in his hand, and a bag close to him. Then came the smaller animals, as horses and asses of a large size, and upon these, amidst the luggage, sat the men who belonged to the chief. Then came another chief with his camel. These animals advanced smoothly, but at a fast pace, and placed their feet with care. Their bodies did not seem to stir; their feet only seemed to be in motion. The men, also, were calm, as if they were free from care. All was tranquil and sweet like a peaceful dream. I could

not help making this striking reflection on what I saw. These good people know not yet the Lord, and they go to him with such order and peacefulness and grace; while we, whom He has delivered and loaded with benefits, are so disorderly and irreverent in our processions.

“On Wednesday, the 30th of November, I saw the cortége stop in a plain near to a well. A man came out from a cabin, of which there were many in the neighbourhood, and opened the well for them. They gave their beasts water, and made a short halt without unloading them.

“On Saturday the 1st of December I saw the cortége, which yesterday had followed a road which led up to an elevated table-land. On their right were mountains, and it seemed in the place where the road descended that they approached a country where were many dwellings, trees and fountains. It seemed to me to be the country of those people, whom I had seen the year before, and more recently

still, spin and weave cotton. They worshipped idols like bulls. They offered different kinds of food to the numerous troop that followed the cortége; but they did not themselves use the plates from which these had eaten, at which I was surprised.

“On Sunday the 2nd of December I saw the holy Kings in the neighbourhood of a city, the name of which seemed like Casour, and which was composed of tents, erected on foundations of stone. They stopped here with another King to whom the city belonged, and whose residence was at some distance. Since their meeting in the city till now they had spent fifty-three or fifty-six hours on their journey. They described to the King of Casour everything that they had seen in the stars. He was very much astonished, looked at the star, which was conducting them, and saw there a little Infant with a cross. He begged of them to tell him on their return what they had seen, as he, also, desired to raise altars to the Infant, and offer sacrifices

to Him. I shall be curious to know if he will keep his word when they return. I heard them relate to him the origin of their observations on the stars, and I recollect as follows:

“The ancestors of the three Kings were of the race of Job, who had anciently dwelt near Caucasus, and who had also possessions in other countries far distant. About fifteen hundred years before Jesus Christ, they had formed only a single tribe. The prophet Balaam was of their country. One of his disciples had made known the prophecy, ‘A star shall arise out of Jacob,’ and had given instructions on this subject. His teaching had widely spread from thence; they had erected a large tower on a mountain, and many learned astronomers resided there in turn. I have seen this tower, which was itself like a mountain, large at the base and terminating in a point. Everything which they observed in the heavens was noted, and passed from mouth to mouth. At several intervals, these observations were interrupted by different events.

Later they led to impious abominations, to the extent of sacrificing infants. They believed, however, that the promised Infant would soon come. About five centuries before the birth of Jesus Christ, their observations had ceased. They were then divided into three branches, formed by three brothers, who lived separately with their families. These brothers had three daughters, to whom God had granted the gift of prophecy. They ran through the country, clothed in long garments, and made predictions relating to the star, and the Child that was to come forth from Jacob. They then set about their observation of the stars, and the expectation of the Infant became very great among the tribes. The three Kings were descended from these three brothers by fifteen generations, who succeeded in a direct line, during about five hundred years; but in consequence of the mixture with other races the colour of their skin was changed, and in this respect they differed from one another.

“For five hundred years the ancestors of the three Kings had never ceased to come together from time to time to observe the stars with each other. All remarkable events in relation to the future coming of the Messiah had been indicated to them by marvellous signs which they saw in the heavens. I saw many of them during the narrative, but I cannot clearly relate them.

“After the conception of the Blessed Virgin, consequently, during fifteen years, these signs shewed most distinctly that the coming of the Child was near at hand. Finally, they had seen many things relating to the passion of our Lord. They could calculate exactly the time when the star of Jacob, prophesied by Balaam, would come, for they had seen the ladder of Jacob, and from the number of steps and the succession of representations there shewn they could calculate the approach of the Saviour as by an almanack; for the top of the ladder joined this star, or rather the star was the last image which appeared there.

At the time of the conception of Mary, they had seen the Virgin with a sceptre and a balance, in the scales of which were ears of wheat and grapes. Soon after they had seen the Virgin with the Child.

“Bethlehem appeared to them a beautiful palace, or house, where abundant benedictions were collected and distributed. They saw also the heavenly Jerusalem, and between these two dwellings a dismal road, full of thorns and strife and blood. They took all this literally. They believed that the expected King was born in the midst of great splendour, and that all people would do him homage. This is why they also went to honour Him and bring their presents. They took the heavenly Jerusalem for His kingdom on earth, and it was to it they thought they were going. As to the road strewed with difficulties, they considered that this represented their journey, or else a war which threatened the new-born King. They knew not that it was a representation of the dolorous way of the passion.

Lower down on the ladder of Jacob they saw (and I saw also) a tower, artistically built, very like the towers which I have seen on the mountain of the prophets, and where the Blessed Virgin took refuge at one time during a storm. I know not what more this signified—perhaps the flight into Egypt. There was a long series of representations in this ladder of Jacob, among the rest many symbols figurative of the Blessed Virgin, of which some are found in the litanies, as also the sealed fountain; also the figures of Kings, of whom some had a sceptre, others branches of a tree. They saw these images manifested in the stars, and they saw them continually during the three last nights. Then the chief of them sent messengers to the others; and when they saw the Kings present their offerings to the new-born babe, they set out on their journey with their presents, not wishing to be the last to render Him their homage. All the tribes of the worshippers of the stars had seen the star, but they alone followed it.

The star which led them was not a comet, but a brilliant meteor, carried by an angel.

“It was these visions which caused them to depart in the expectation of great things, and they were afterwards much surprised to find nothing of all this. They were much astonished at their reception by Herod, and at the ignorance of everybody of these things. When they arrived at Bethlehem, and instead of the magnificent palace which they had seen in the star, they saw only a poor cave, they were troubled with many doubts. But they remained firm to their faith, and at the sight of the Infant Jesus they recognised that what they had seen in the stars was accomplished.

“These observations of the stars were accompanied by fasts, prayers, ceremonies, and all kinds of abstinence and purification. The worship of the stars exercised a pernicious influence on those who were in connection with the wicked spirit. These at the times of their visions were seized with convulsions,

and it was in consequence of them that the abominable sacrifice of infants had taken place. Others—for example, the holy Kings—saw all these things clearly, with tranquillity and a sweet emotion, and they became better and more pious. When the Kings quitted Casour, I saw them joined by a considerable troop of travellers of distinction, who followed the same road.

“On the 3rd and 4th of December I saw the caravan traverse a large plain. On the 5th they halted at a well. They gave their beasts water and food, without unloading them, and prepared some food for themselves.”

During the last days, Sister Emmerich, whilst sleeping, chanted several times words in rhyme, to strange but very touching airs. Being asked about this, she said :

“I sang with the good Kings ; they sing so agreeably,—words, such as these, for example :

We wish to pass over the mountains,
And to kneel before the new-born King.

They improvised, and sang in alternate verses.

One would begin; then all the others would repeat the verse which he had sung. Then another would add a verse, and thus they continued, riding all the time, to chant their sweet and touching melodies.

“In the middle of the star, or rather the luminous globe, which shewed them the way, I saw a Child with a cross appear, and this luminous globe, where they had seen the apparition of the Virgin in the stars, was shewn above the image, and was all at once set in motion.”

BETHLEHEM. THE BLESSED VIRGIN HAS A
PRESENTIMENT OF THE APPROACH OF THE
THREE KINGS.

“My contemplation passed alternately from the grotto of the Crib at Bethlehem to the caravan of the three Kings.

“Mary had a vision of the approach of the three Kings during their halt with the King of Casour. She saw also that this King would raise an altar to the Child. She narrated this to St. Joseph and Elizabeth, and told them they must clear the grotto of the Crib, and prepare everything for the reception of the three Kings on their arrival.

“The people on whose account Mary had retired yesterday into the other grotto were visitors of curiosity. During the last few days a larger number came. To-day Elizabeth returned to Juttah, in company with a servant.

“December 6-8.—There was more tranquillity in the grotto of the Crib during these two days. The Holy Family remained alone for the greater part of the time. Mary’s servant, a woman of about thirty years of age, very grave and very humble, was also present. She was a widow, without children, a relative of Anne, who had given her a home at her house. Her deceased husband had been very severe with her because she so often visited the Esseniens; for she was very pious, and waited for the Salvation of Israel. He was angry on this account, as bad men are in our days, who consider that their wives go too often to church. He had left her, and died some time afterwards. The vagabonds who had offered abusive language and curses near the grotto of the Crib, had not returned during the last few days. They were beggars going to Jerusalem for the feast of the Dedication of the Temple, instituted by the Machabees.

“Joseph celebrated the Sabbath under a

lamp in the grotto of the crib with Mary and her servant. On Saturday evening commenced the feast of the Dedication of the Temple. Everything was quiet that day. The numerous visitors were of those going to the festival. Anne frequently sent messengers to bring presents and to learn the news. The Jewish women do not suckle their children long without giving them some other food beside their milk ; so the Infant Jesus partook after a short time of boiled food made of the pith of a kind of reed ; this food is sweet, light and nourishing.

“December 9-10.—Joseph in the evening and morning lighted his little lamps to celebrate the festival of the Dedication. Since the commencement of the festival at Jerusalem everything has been very quiet here.

“Monday, December 10.—To-day a servant came from St. Anne. He brought to the holy Virgin, amongst other things, everything necessary to make a girdle ; also a charming basket full of fruit, and covered over with

roses, which were placed upon the fruit, and which remained very fresh. It was a narrow and tall basket. These roses were not of the colour of ours, but pale and of nearly the colour of flesh. There were some also yellow and white, and also some buds. Mary seemed to be pleased with them, and placed the basket near her.

“ . . . I have frequently seen the three Kings on their march. The road was mountainous ; they crossed the mountains of which I have spoken before, and which were strewed with small stones like potsherds. I liked to see them ; they were so pretty and polished. There were also other mountains, where were found large quantities of transparent stones, like birds’ eggs, also a quantity of white sand. I saw these in the country where the three Kings afterwards settled, and where Jesus visited them during the third year of His ministry.

“Tuesday, December 11, and Thursday, December 13.—It seemed to me that Joseph

had a desire to remain at Bethlehem, and to settle there after the Purification of Mary, and, I believe, he had made some slight arrangements with this intention. During the last three days, persons of the better class from Bethlehem came to the grotto of the Crib. Now, they would willingly have taken the Holy Family to their houses. Mary concealed herself in the adjoining cave, and Joseph declined their offers. St. Anne frequently visited the Blessed Virgin. I have seen her lately very busy; she divided into portions her flocks for the poor and for the Temple. The Holy Family also distributed all that they had. The festival of the Dedication was still celebrated morning and evening. It was probably joined to another festival.

“On the 13th I saw them at Jerusalem, making changes in the ceremonies of the festival. I saw a priest with a small scroll near St. Joseph in the grotto; they prayed together near a little table, which had a red and white cover. It seemed either that this

priest wished to know if St. Joseph celebrated the feast, or that he came to tell him of a new feast.* During these last few days, the grotto was peaceful and without any visitors.

* She seemed to see a new feast-day, notwithstanding she believed that that of the new moon should have commenced. She did not know very well what it was.

BETHLEHEM. THE VISIT TO THE CRIB. THE
CARAVAN OF THE THREE KINGS. THEY
ARRIVE IN THE PROMISED LAND.

"December 14 to 18.—The festival of the Dedication ended with the Sabbath. Joseph did not light the little lamps any more. On Sunday, the 16th, and Monday, the 17th, many persons from the neighbourhood still came to the crib. The impudent beggars also shewed themselves at the entrance. This was because people were then returning from the festival.

"17th. I saw the messengers from St. Anne with provisions and several other things; but Mary is more ready to give away than I am. All was soon distributed. I saw Joseph begin to make arrangements in the grotto of the Crib, in those at the side, and in that of the tomb of Maraha. They were expecting soon the visit of St. Anne, and that of the three

Kings, after the vision which Mary had had.

“ Monday, December 17. — I saw to-day the caravan of the three Kings arrive in the evening at a small city, where the dwellings were a good distance from each other. Many of the houses were surrounded with tall hedges. It seemed to me to be the first place in Judea. They were in the direction of Bethlehem ; however, they turned to the right, probably because they did not know the direct route. When they arrived at this place, their chants seemed more animated and expressive ; they were filled with joy, because the star had here an extraordinary brightness. It was like moonlight, so that shadows were distinctly seen ; nevertheless, the inhabitants of this place seemed either not to see the star, or not to trouble themselves particularly about it. Some of the travellers had dismounted from their beasts, and the inhabitants had helped to water them. I then thought of the time of Abraham, when men were so kind and ready to assist each other. Many

of these people accompanied the cortège on its passing through the city, carrying branches in their hands. I did not observe the star always equally bright; sometimes it was obscured; it seemed to cast more light in those places where the people were well disposed. When the travellers saw it brighter, they were much moved, and believed that perhaps it was there they should find the Messiah.

“Tuesday, December 18.—This morning, without delay, they skirted a gloomy city covered with a mist. Soon after they crossed a watercourse which falls into the Dead Sea (perhaps the Arnon). Many of the people who had joined them remained in these two last places; I have understood that one of these cities had served as a place of refuge for some one during a strife which had taken place before Solomon mounted the throne. They crossed the stream this morning, and then followed a good road.

“Wednesday, December 19.—This evening I saw the cortège of the three Kings, which now

numbered about 200 persons (for their liberality had attracted many of the common people to join them) on the eastern side of a city lying to the west, which Jesus passed, without entering it, on the 31st of July in the second year of His ministry. The name of the city resembled Manathea, Methanea, Medana, or Madian.* There dwelt there Jews and Pagans; the inhabitants were wicked. Though a wide road ran through the city, the three Kings would not enter it; they passed by the eastern side, to reach an ancient enclosure where they found sheds and stables. The Kings pitched their tents, gave their cattle fodder and water, and took some food themselves. I saw the Kings stay here on Thursday the 20th, and Friday the 21st; but they were greatly troubled, for here, as in the former city, no one knew anything of the new-born King. Nevertheless, I heard them

* St. Jerome mentions a city called Methane, near the Arnon, from which came the Methanites spoken of in the first book of Paralipomenon, xi. 43.

discuss in a friendly manner with the inhabitants many things relating to the cause of their starting, the length and all the circumstances of their journey. This is what I now remember :

“The new-born King had been announced to them a very long time ago. I think it was shortly after the time of Job, and before Abraham went into Egypt; for a troop of about three thousand men of Media, coming from the country of Job (there were also others coming from different countries), had made an expedition into Egypt, and had gone as far as the country of Heliopolis. I know not why they had gone thus far, but it was a military expedition. I believe they came to assist some one. Nevertheless, their expedition was to be blamed, as it was directed against something holy. I know not if it was against holy men, or against a religious mystery, concerning the accomplishment of the Divine promise.

“In the neighbourhood of Heliopolis, many

of their chiefs had a revelation, the result of the apparition of an angel, which hindered them from proceeding further. I cannot say more as to how these things came to pass ; but they were compelled to stop, return home, and observe the stars. I saw them establish fêtes of rejoicing in Egypt. They raised triumphal arches and altars, ornamented them with flowers, and then returned to their own country. They were people of Media, worshippers of the stars. They were very tall, almost giants ; they had a superior look, and a beautiful tint of brown, bordering on yellow. They travelled with their flocks from place to place, and took the command everywhere because of their superior power. I have forgotten the name of the principal prophet who was with them. They knew a great deal about predictions, and observed certain signs given to them by animals. Sometimes animals would throw themselves across their path, and would suffer themselves to be killed, rather than go away. This was, to these

people, a warning, and they turned out of their path when this happened. These Medes, returning from Egypt, were the first, according to the statement of the three Kings, to report the prophecy, and from that time they began to observe the stars. These observations fell into oblivion, but they were renewed by the efforts of a disciple of Balaam; and a thousand years after him, the three prophetesses, daughters of the ancestors of the three Kings, caused them to be revived. Five hundred years later, namely, at the epoch to which they had now arrived, the star had appeared, and they had followed it to adore the new-born King.

“They told all these things to their hearers with great simplicity and sincerity, and they were troubled to see that these people seemed not to believe in Him, Who for two thousand years had been the object of expectation to their ancestors.

“The star was in the evening obscured by vapours, but during the night it appeared

large and brilliant among the fleeting clouds, and it appeared very near to the earth. They then rose hastily, awoke the inhabitants of the country, and pointed it out to them. These people looked at the heavens with astonishment and some emotion, but many of them were irritated against the three Kings, and the greater number only tried to profit by their liberality. I heard them tell what distance they had passed from the place of their meeting to this place. They reckoned by days' journey of travel on foot, which they reckoned at twelve leagues. With their animals, which were dromedaries, and which went more swiftly than horses, they accomplished thirty-six leagues in the day and night, including their halts. Thus the most distant of the three Kings could manage in two days the five-times twelve leagues which separated them from the place where they met; and the least distant made in one day and one night their three-times twelve leagues. From the place where they met to this place,

they had made six hundred leagues, and for that, reckoning from the birth of Jesus Christ, they had taken about twenty-five days and as many nights, counting also their days of rest.

“The evening of Friday, the 21st of December, as the Sabbath commenced for the Jews who resided here, and who went to the synagogue of a small place in the neighbourhood, passing over the water on a bridge which lay to the west, the Holy Kings prepared to depart.

“Several times I saw the Jews observing the star which guided the Kings, and express on the occasion great astonishment, but they were not respectful. These bold and unfortunate men pressed like a swarm of wasps round the three Kings to make demands of them, and they, full of patience, distributed without ceasing small yellow triangular pieces, which were very thin, and also small beads of a darker coloured metal. They must have been very rich. Afterwards, conducted by the

inhabitants of the city, they made the circuit of the walls. In this city I saw temples with idols. They afterwards crossed the stream by a bridge, and passed by a Jewish village. They had still twenty-four leagues to travel to arrive at Jerusalem."

BETHLEHEM. ARRIVAL OF ST. ANNE. LIBERALITY OF THE HOLY FAMILY.

"The evening of the 19th of December, I saw St. Anne with Mary of Heli, a female and a male servant, pass the night a short distance from Bethania. They went on to Bethlehem. Joseph had almost finished his arrangements in the grotto of the Crib and the side-grottos, to lodge his guests from Nazareth, and to receive the three Kings, whose arrival Mary had announced when they were at Casour. Joseph and Mary had gone into the other grotto with the Infant Jesus. The grotto of the Crib was entirely cleared. The ass alone had been left there.

"Joseph, as well as I can remember, had some time since paid the second tax. More inquisitive people were come to Bethlehem to see the Infant. He quietly suffered Himself

to be held by some, and turned away weeping from others.

"I saw the Blessed Virgin at peace in her new lodging, which had been conveniently arranged. Her couch was against the wall. The Infant Jesus was near to her, in a long basket made of bark, which rested upon tressels. Mary's couch, as well as the cradle of the Infant Jesus, which was on one side, were separated from the rest by a partition of basket-work.

"During the day, when she did not wish to be alone, she sat before this partition, with the Infant Jesus alone by her side. Joseph reposed in a distant part of the grotto, which was separated from the rest. I saw Joseph bring Mary food on a plate, also a small pitcher and water.

"Thursday, December 20.—This evening a fasting-day commenced. All the food was prepared for the day following; the fire and all openings were covered up. St. Anne had arrived with the elder sister of the Blessed

Virgin and a servant. These visitors had to pass the night in the grotto of the Crib; it was for this purpose that the Holy Family had retired into the side grotto. This day I saw Mary place the Infant in the arms of her mother. She was deeply touched. Anne had brought with her bed-clothes and provisions. She slept in the same place where Elizabeth had reposed, and Mary related to her with much emotion everything that had passed. Anne wept with the Blessed Virgin, and the whole account was interrupted by caresses of the Infant Jesus.

“Friday, December 21.—I saw to-day the Holy Virgin returned to the grotto of the Crib, and the little Jesus lying again in the Crib. When Joseph and Mary are alone near the Infant, I often see them adore Him. To-day, also, I saw Anne standing near the Crib with the Blessed Virgin in a respectful manner, and contemplating the Infant Jesus with feelings of great devotion and fervour. I do not know if the persons who accompanied

St. Anne had passed the night in another cave, or if they had gone elsewhere; I am inclined to believe that they had gone elsewhere.

"To-day I saw that St. Anne had brought several things for the Mother and the Child. Mary had already received a good many things since she had come, but everything about her presented the appearance of poverty, because she gives away everything except what she is strictly in need of. I heard her tell St. Anne that the Kings of the East would come soon, and that their visit would make a great impression. I believe that during the stay of the Kings St. Anne was to go three leagues away to the house of her sister and to return later on.

"Saturday, December 22.—This evening after the close of the Sabbath, I saw St. Anne and those who came with her leave the Blessed Virgin for a time. She went three leagues away, into the tribe of Benjamin, to the house of a married sister. I don't know

the name of the place, which consisted only of a few houses in the country. It was half a league from the last halting-place of the Holy Family on their journey to Bethlehem."

JOURNEY OF THE THREE KINGS. THEY ARRIVE
AT JERUSALEM. HEROD CONSULTS THE
DOCTORS OF THE LAW.

“Saturday, December 22.—The cortége of the three Kings departed at night from Mathanea, and followed a regular road. They did not go through any city, but passed all the small places in which Jesus, at the end of the month of July in the third year of His ministry, had cured and blessed little children. Among these was Bethabara, where they arrived early in the morning for the passage of the Jordan. As it was the Sabbath-day, they met but few people on their way. This morning, at seven o'clock, I saw the caravan pass the Jordan. At ordinary times the river was passed by an arrangement of planks, but for the use of large numbers with heavy baggage they threw over the river a kind of bridge. The boatmen who lived on

the banks were accustomed to do this work for a remuneration, but, as it was the Sabbath-day and they could not work, the travellers undertook the passage themselves, and were assisted by some pagans, servants of the boatmen. The Jordan was not very wide here, and was full of sand-banks. They placed planks upon the beams by which the crossing was generally made, and caused their camels to cross over. It was a long time before all could be landed on the western bank."

The same evening at half-past five, she said :

"They have left Jericho to the right ; they are in the direction of Bethlehem, but they have turned to the right, in the direction of Jerusalem. There are about a hundred men with them. I saw in the distance a little city, which I know well ; it is near a small watercourse, which, coming from Jerusalem, flows from west to east. They must certainly pass by this small city. For some time they have had this little stream on their left.

Sometimes they see Jerusalem, sometimes it disappears, according as the road rises or descends." Soon afterwards she remarked, "They have not passed by this small city, they have turned to the right towards Jerusalem.

"Saturday evening, December 22.—After the close of the Sabbath, I saw the cortège of the three Kings arrive before Jerusalem. I saw the city with its high towers rising towards heaven. The star which led them had almost disappeared; but it still cast a feeble light behind the city. As the travellers approached near Jerusalem, they lost confidence, for the star did not shew itself nearly so brilliantly; and in Judea they saw it less frequently. They had expected to find everywhere festivals and rejoicing in consequence of the birth of this Saviour, on account of Whom they had come so far; but as they met nothing but the most complete indifference on the matter, they became sorrowful and troubled, and feared that they might be wholly deceived.

"The cortége, which probably contained two hundred persons, was almost a quarter of a league in length. Already at Casour a certain number of persons of distinction had joined them; others had done the same later on. The three Kings were seated on three dromedaries; three other dromedaries were loaded with luggage. Each King had near him four men of his tribe; most of the other persons belonging to the cortége were riding on very light-footed animals, which had very beautiful heads; I know not if they were horses or asses; they looked most like horses. The animals which were used by persons of distinction had handsome harness and beautiful bridles; they were adorned with chains and stars of gold. Some of those in the suite of the Kings went into the city, and returned with police-officers and soldiers. Their arrival with so large a company at a time when there was no festival, and without having come for purposes of commerce, was, especially on this route, a most unusual circumstance.

On being questioned they replied in explanation ; they spoke of the star, and of the Child lately born. Nobody could understand them. They were much troubled at this, and thought that they had been deceived when they found not a single person who seemed to know anything about the Saviour of the world ; for everybody looked upon them with surprise, and could not understand what they wanted. When the keepers of the gateway saw with what generosity they gave large alms to the poor people who came near them, and heard them say that they were seeking for some place in which to stay, and that they would pay liberally, when they added that they wished to speak with King Herod, some of them went into the city, and then ensued frequent communications, messages and explanations.

“In the meantime the three Kings conversed with the people of every class who were assembled around them. Some of these people had heard of an Infant born in

Bethlehem, but they did not think this of any importance, since the parents were poor and of the lower class ; others ridiculed them. They understood from what was said that Herod knew nothing of the new-born Child, and as moreover they did not expect much from Herod, they were more and more discouraged ; for they were embarrassed at the attitude which they must take up and at what they must say to him. Their distress, nevertheless, did not disturb their peace of mind, and they began to pray. Then their courage revived, and they said to one another, ' He Who has led us so swiftly by means of the star will know how to take us happily back to our homes.'

"After the officers returned, they conducted the cortége by the side of the city walls, and made them enter by a gate which was near to Calvary. At a short distance from the fish-market, they were conducted into a round court, surrounded with stables and apartments, and at the entrance of which guards

were placed. The beasts of burden were put into the stables ; they themselves retired under the sheds near the fountain, which was in the middle of the court. This court was bounded on one side by rising ground ; the other sides were open, and there were trees standing near. Official persons came two and two with lanterns, and inspected the baggage of the Kings. I think they were custom-house officers.

“The palace of Herod was situated higher up, a short distance from this building, and I saw the way lighted by lanterns and torches placed on poles. Herod sent one of his servants with instructions to bring Theokeno secretly into the palace. It was near ten o'clock at night. Theokeno was received in the lower part of the palace by a courtier of Herod, and questioned as to the motives of his journey. He narrated everything with great simplicity, and desired this man to enquire of Herod where was the new-born King of the Jews, Whose star they had seen and followed.

"When the courtier had made his report to Herod, he was at first much troubled, but he recovered himself, and replied that he wished to make some enquiries on the subject, and he desired him to get the three Kings to wait quietly, as he wished to talk with them on the morrow and tell them what he had learned.

"When Theokeno returned to the companions of his journey, he could bring them no news to console them. Nothing was arranged for their rest, and they had to pack up many things they had unpacked. I did not see them sleep during the night, but some of them wandered about the city looking at the heavens, as if seeking the star. In Jerusalem itself everything was silent, but near the court there was some stir, and they were taking note. The Kings supposed that Herod knew all, but concealed it from them.

"Herod was holding a festival at the time that Theokeno was in the palace. The passages were lighted up. There were all sorts

of people, and women immodestly dressed.

"The questions of Theokeno relating to the new-born King troubled Herod very much, and he soon caused the chief priests and the scribes to come to him. I saw them towards midnight come to him with scrolls of writing. They wore the priest's costume, badges on the breast, and sashes upon which letters were embroidered. There were about twenty of them round him. He enquired of them where the Messiah should be born. I then saw them unroll their writings, and reply, pointing out a passage with the finger: 'He should be born,' said they, 'in Bethlehem of Judah; for it is written in the prophet Micheas, *And thou, Bethlehem, art not the least of the princes of Judah, for out of thee shall come the captain who shall govern my people Israel.*' I then saw Herod walking with some of them on the top of the flat roof of the palace, and look in vain for the star of which Theokeno had spoken.

"He was extremely disturbed, but the

priests and doctors spoke to him at great length to quiet him, saying that he should not attach any importance to the coming of the Magi Kings; that these people, lovers of the marvellous, were always having singular fancies about their stars; that if anything of the kind had taken place, it would have been known in the Temple and in the Holy City, and that Herod and they themselves would be sure to know about it."

THE KINGS BEFORE HEROD. HIS CONDUCT
AND MOTIVES.

"Sunday, December 23.—To-day, very early in the morning, Herod caused the three Kings to be brought secretly into his palace. They were received under an arcade, and conducted into a hall, where I saw green branches and flowers in vases, and where they had prepared some refreshments. After some time Herod came in; they bowed before him, and asked him about the new-born King of the Jews. Herod concealed his agitation as well as he could, and pretended great joy. There were still some of the Scribes with him; he asked them questions as to what they had seen, and Mensor described to him the last apparition they had seen in the heavens before their departure. It was, he said, a Virgin, and before her an Infant, from whose right side a luminous branch came forth; above her was

seen a tower with several entrances. This tower became a great city, above which the Child had appeared with a crown, a sword, and a sceptre, like a king; after which they saw themselves and all the kings of the world prostrate before the Infant and adoring Him; for He had a kingdom to which all other kingdoms must submit.

“Herod told them that there was in existence a prophecy saying something like this of Bethlehem Ephrata, and he encouraged them to go there without any noise, and when they had found the Infant to return and tell him, that he also might come and adore Him. The Kings, who had not touched any of the food which had been brought to them, returned to their lodging. It was still early in the morning, for I saw the lamps lighted before the palace. Herod conferred with them very secretly to prevent its being talked about. When the day began to dawn, they prepared to depart. The people who had accompanied the cortége to Jerusalem had

since the previous day been dispersed about the city.

"Herod was now full of discontent and vexation. At the time of the birth of Jesus Christ he was staying at a country-house which he had near Jericho, and he had been guilty of a base assassination. He had placed in the principal administration of the Temple people on his own side, who sought out for his advantage everything that took place there, and informed against those who were opposed to his designs. The chief of his opponents was a high functionary of the Temple, a just and pious man. Herod, under the pretext of friendship, had invited him to come and see him at Jericho. He then caused him to be attacked and assassinated in the desert, attributing the murder to the action of brigands. Some days after he went to Jerusalem to take part in the feast of the Dedication of the Temple, which took place on the 25th of the month of Casleu, and got engaged in a very disagreeable affair. Wishing to please the

Jews in his own fashion, he had caused the golden figure of a lamb, or rather of a goat (for it had horns), to be made, and had it placed over the door-way which led from the women's court to the court of sacrifices. He wished to do this of his own authority, and yet the people were highly pleased with him for doing so.

The priests were opposed to this, and he threatened to make them pay a penalty. They said they would pay it, but that they would not admit the image in question, because it was contrary to the prescriptions of the law. Herod in a rage wished to place the image secretly, but, when they had brought it in, a zealous Israelite seized hold of it and threw it on the ground, so that it broke into two pieces. There was a tumult on this occasion, and Herod had the man thrown into prison.

"This affair very much vexed him, and he was sorry that he had come to the festival, but his courtiers tried to distract and amuse him.

“He was in this temper when rumours were spread of the birth of Christ. For a long time past many pious men had been living in expectation of the coming of the Messias, and which they considered as near at hand. What had happened at the birth of Christ had been talked about by the shepherds; nevertheless many persons of good position regarded all this as fables and idle talk. Herod had also heard of this, and had caused secret enquiries to be made at Bethlehem. His emissaries had come to the Crib three days after the birth of Jesus, and, after conversing with St. Joseph, they declared, proud people as they were, that it was a matter of no consequence, that there was nobody there but a poor family in a miserable grotto, and that there was no reason to take any notice of it.

Their pride even had hindered them from the very first from questioning Joseph seriously about it, and especially as they had received orders to avoid everything that would

attract attention. Then all at once Herod sees the three Kings arrive with their numerous suite, which threw him into great trouble; for they came from a great distance, and this was something more than simple rumours. As they spoke with such confidence of the new-born King, he pretended also to wish to pay homage to Him, and they rejoiced to see him so disposed. The proud blindness of the scribes could not reassure him, and the interest which he had also in keeping the matter as secret as possible determined his course of action. He made no objection to the explanations of the three Kings, nor would he lay hands so soon on Jesus, so as not to give credit to their words in the presence of a people very difficult to manage. He resolved to obtain more exact information by means of the three Kings, and to take afterwards his measures accordingly. But, as the Kings, warned by God, did not return to him, he represented their flight as the consequence of an illusion or a lie on their part.

It was reported everywhere that they dared not reappear, as they were ashamed of the gross error into which they had fallen, and into which they had wished to lead others; for except for this what reason had they to fly clandestinely, after having been received in so friendly a manner?

"It was thus that he tried afterwards to hush up the whole affair. He only said at Bethlehem that people should have no connection with the family of which he had heard speak, nor receive reports and stories likely to mislead people; and, as the Holy Family returned to Nazareth fifteen days afterwards, people ceased to talk of occurrences upon which the multitude had but vague information, and pious people who hoped, kept silence.

"When all appeared almost forgotten, Herod thought to make away with Jesus; but he learned that the family had left Nazareth with the Child. He made a search for Him for a long time, but, all hope of finding Him having ceased, his trouble increased, and he

had recourse to the desperate measure of the massacre of the children. He took the greatest precautions, however, and sent beforehand troops to every place where there was any danger of an insurrection. I believe the massacre took place in seven different localities."

THE HOLY KINGS GO FROM JERUSALEM TO
BETHLEHEM. THEY ADORE THE CHILD, AND
OFFER HIM THEIR PRESENTS.

"I saw the three Kings arrive at a gate situate on the south ; a number of men followed them as far as a brook which is in front of the city, and afterwards returned. When they had crossed the stream, they made a short halt, and looked out for the star. Having seen it, they set up a joyful shout, and continued their march singing. The star did not lead them in a direct line, but by a way which turned a little to the west. They passed near a small city, which I know well, behind which I saw them stop and pray about noon in a pleasant spot near a hamlet. At this place a spring of water gushed forth from the earth before them, which filled them with joy. They dismounted, and hollowed a basin for the spring, which they surrounded

with sand stones, and grass. They encamped there for several hours, gave their horses water and food, and they themselves took something to eat; for at Jerusalem they had had no rest in consequence of the numerous things they had to attend to. At a later period I have seen our Lord stay near this spring several times with His disciples.

“The star, which shone during the night like a globe of fire, now resembled the moon seen by day-light; it did not appear of regular form. It seemed often hid by the clouds. On the direct road from Bethlehem to Jerusalem there was a great stir of travellers with their luggage and asses. It arose probably from people who were returning from Bethlehem after having paid the tax, or who were going to Jerusalem for the market or to visit the Temple. The road which the Kings took was solitary, and God, no doubt, led them by this that they might arrive at Bethlehem in the evening and without causing too much attention. I saw them resume their march

when the sun was already very low. They went in the same order as they had come : Mensor, the youngest, went first ; then came Sair, the tawny, and lastly Theokeno, the white, and the most aged.

“Sunday, December 24.—To-day I saw by the evening twilight the cortége of the holy Kings arrive before Bethlehem near the same building at which Joseph and Mary were enrolled. It was an ancient house of the family of David. There was little left but the ruins of the walls. It had belonged to the parents of St. Joseph, and was a large edifice, surrounded by smaller buildings, with an enclosed court, before which was a square planted with trees ; and in this there was a fountain.

“I saw in this place Roman soldiers, because the house served as the office of the tax-gatherers.

“When the cortége arrived, a number of inquisitive persons assembled around. The star having disappeared, the Kings were in

some anxiety. Some men came and interrogated them. They dismounted from their beasts, and servants came from the house and met them with branches in their hands, and offered them refreshments. It was the custom thus to welcome strangers such as these.

"I said to myself, they are much more polite to them than to the poor St. Joseph, because they have distributed pieces of gold.

"They spoke to them of the valley of the shepherds as a good place to pitch their tents. They remained a considerable time undecided what to do. I did not hear them ask any questions as to the new-born King of the Jews; they knew that Bethlehem was the spot pointed out by prophecy, but in consequence of the language of Herod they feared to attract attention.

"Soon they saw the star shine on the side of Bethlehem,—a meteor like the rising moon. They then remounted their beasts; then, following a ditch, they went round the south of Bethlehem; they turned towards the east,

towards the grotto of the Crib, which they approached by the side of the plain where the angels had appeared to the shepherds. When they had arrived near the tomb of Maraha, in the valley which is behind the grotto of the Crib, they dismounted. Their followers opened much of their baggage, pitched a large tent which they carried with them, and made other arrangements with the assistance of the shepherds, who shewed them the most convenient spots.

“Their encampment was partly arranged when the Kings saw the star arise clear and brilliant over the hill of the Crib, and direct its rays perpendicularly. I saw them regard this with great astonishment. It was dusk; they could see no house, but only the form of a hill like a rampart. All at once they were seized with great joy, for they saw in the light the resplendent figure of a Child; all uncovered their heads in testimony of reverence. The three Kings then went towards the hill, and found the door of the

grotto. Mensor opened it ; he saw there the grotto filled with a heavenly light, and at the end the Virgin holding the Infant, and sitting as his companions and he had seen in their visions. He soon returned, and told the others what he had seen. Then Joseph came out from the grotto, accompanied by an aged shepherd, to meet them. They told him in all simplicity how they had come to adore the new-born King of the Jews, whose star they had seen, and to offer him their presents. Joseph received them in a friendly manner, and the old shepherd went with them near their followers, and helped them in their arrangements, as did some other shepherds who were there.

“They themselves prepared as for a solemn ceremony. I saw them put on large white mantles, which had a long train ; these mantles had a shining appearance, as if made of raw silk ; they were very beautiful, and floated lightly round them ; this was their ordinary costume for religious ceremonies.

They carried at their belts purses and boxes of gold hanging by chains; all this was covered by their long mantles. Each of the Kings was followed by four persons of his family; there were also some servants of Mensor, who carried a little table, a table-cover with a fringe, and other small articles. When they had followed St. Joseph under the shed which was before the grotto, they spread the cover on the table, and each of the Kings placed upon it some of the boxes of gold and vessels which they unfastened from their girdles; these were the presents which they offered in common. Mensor and all the others took off their sandals, and Joseph opened the door of the grotto. Two young men belonging to Mensor's retinue marched before him; they spread a piece of cloth on the floor of the grotto; they then retired. Two others followed them with the table on which the presents were placed. On coming before the Blessed Virgin, he took them, and, bending one knee to the ground,

he placed them respectfully at her feet. Behind Mensor were the four members of his family, who bowed humbly. Sair and Theokeno with their companions stood behind at the entrance. When they advanced, they were, as it were, inebriated with joy and emotion, and dazzled with the light which filled the grotto, notwithstanding that there was no other light than the Light of the World. Mary, leaning upon one arm, was rather reclining than sitting on a rug to the left of the Infant Jesus, Who was placed in the spot where He was born, in a Crib covered with a rug and placed on a tressel; but at the moment that they entered the Blessed Virgin sat up, veiled herself, and took unto her arms the Infant Jesus enveloped in her large veil. Mensor knelt down, and, placing the presents before her, he expressed himself in touching words, doing homage and crossing his hands before his breast, and bending down with his head uncovered.

“During this time Mary had uncovered the

upper part of the body of the Child, Who looked round with a sweet expression in the midst of the veil that surrounded Him. His mother supported His little head with one of her arms, and encircled Him with the other. He had His little hands joined on His breast, and He frequently extended them graciously around. Oh, how happy in their adoration were these dear men of the East! When I saw them, I said to myself, 'Their hearts are pure and without stain, full of tenderness and innocence, like the hearts of pious children.' There is nothing violent in them, and, notwithstanding, they are full of fire and love. I must be dead; I can only be a spirit, nothing else; otherwise I could not see that, for it does not exist now; nevertheless it does exist now; but it does not exist in time. In ~~God~~ there is no time. In God everything is present. I am dead; I am only a spirit. Whilst I had these very strange thoughts, I heard a voice say to me, 'What does this signify to you? Look to, and praise

the Lord, Who is eternal, and in Whom everything is eternal.'

"I then saw Mensor draw out of a purse which was fastened to his belt a handful of small thick and heavy bars an inch in length, strung together at the end, and shining like gold. They were his present, and he humbly placed them on the knees of the Blessed Virgin by the side of the Infant Jesus. She received the gold with gracious thanks, and covered it with the corner of her mantle. Mensor gave these little bars of virgin gold, because he was full of sincerity and charity, and sought after the truth with a constant and unshaken ardour.

"Mensor retired behind with the four who followed him, and Sair, the tawny King, came forward with his friends, and knelt down with profound humility. He offered his present with touching words; it was a vessel of gold for holding incense, full of small resinous grains of a green colour. He placed it on the table before the Infant Jesus. He

offered incense because he was a man who conformed himself with respect and from the bottom of his heart to the will of God, and followed it with love. He remained a long time kneeling with great fervour before he retired.

“After him came Theokeno, the oldest of the three. He was very advanced in age; his limbs were stiff, and he was unable to kneel, but he remained standing, bowing humbly, and placed on the table a vase of gold with a beautiful green plant. It was a beautiful shrub with a short stem and little curled clusters with elegant white flowers; it was myrrh. He offered myrrh because it was the symbol of mortification and of victory over his passions; for this excellent man had sustained persevering contests against idolatry, polygamy, and the violent customs of his countrymen. In his emotion he remained so long before the Infant Jesus, with his four followers, that I felt sorry for the other servants, who remained outside the grotto; for

they had waited so long to see the Infant Jesus.

“The words of the Kings and of all their companions were full of simplicity, and were very touching. They prostrated themselves before Him, and offered their presents. They expressed themselves very much in this manner: ‘We have seen His star; we know that He is the King of Kings; we come to adore Him and to offer Him our homage and our presents.’ They were as if in an ecstasy, and in their artless and affectionate prayers they recommended to the Infant Jesus themselves, their families, their country, their possessions, and everything on earth which was dearest to them. They offered to the new-born King their hearts, their souls, their thoughts, and their actions; they prayed Him to enlighten them, to give them virtue, goodness, peace, and love; they seemed on fire with love, and shed tears of joy, which flowed down their cheeks and their beards. They were happy; they believed that they had come with the

star, towards which, for thousands of years, their ancestors had turned their eyes and their desires with a constant longing. All the joy of the promise fulfilled after so many ages, was theirs.

“The Mother of God accepted all with humble thanks. At first she did not speak, but a simple movement under her veil showed her pious emotion. The body of the little Child was visible, shining between the folds of her mantle. At the end she addressed to each of them humble and gracious words, and drew her veil a little backward. Oh! I have learned from this a new lesson; I remarked to myself with what sweet and amiable gratitude she receives each present, she who has no need of anything, who possesses Jesus, receives with humility all the gifts of charity. I also for the future will receive humbly and with gratitude all charitable gifts. What goodness in Mary and Joseph!—they keep scarcely anything for themselves, and distribute all to the poor.

“When the Kings and their followers had left the grotto, and had returned to their tent, their servants entered in their turn. They had pitched a tent, unloaded the beasts of burden, put everything in order, and waited patiently and humbly at the door. There were more than thirty of them, and they had also with them a number of children, with only a piece of cloth about their loins, and a small cloak. The servants entered five at a time, and one of the principal persons to whom they belonged conducted them. They knelt round the Infant, and honoured Him in silence. At the end the children entered altogether, fell on their knees, and adored Jesus with an innocent and simple joy.

“The servants did not remain long in the grotto of the Crib, for the Kings re-entered with great solemnity. They had put on other long flowing robes; they carried censers in their hands, and they incensed most reverently the Infant, the Blessed Virgin, St.

Joseph, and all the grotto ; then they retired after bowing profoundly. It was the manner in which these people adored.

“During this time Mary and Joseph were filled with the sweetest joy I ever saw them have. Tears of tenderness flowed down their cheeks. The honours solemnly paid to the Infant Jesus, Whom they were obliged to lodge so poorly, and Whose supreme dignity remained hid within their hearts, gave them infinite consolation. They saw that the all-powerful providence of God, in spite of the blindness of men, had prepared for the Child of promise, and had sent to Him from the most distant lands that which they themselves could not give Him,—worship due to His dignity, rendered by the great ones of the earth with a holy magnificence. They adored Jesus with the holy Kings, and the homage which they gave Him made them happy.

“The tents were arranged in the valley situated behind the grotto of the Crib, as far as the grotto of the tomb of Maraha ; the

beasts were ranged in order, fastened to stakes, separated by cords. Near the large tent which was close to the hill of the Crib was a space, covered by mats, where a part of the baggage was arranged, but the greater part was carried to the grotto of the tomb of Maraha.

“When all had left the Crib, the stars had risen. They assembled in a circle round an old fir-tree, which rose above the grotto of Maraha, and intoned their solemn chants in presence of the stars. I cannot describe how touching were these chants, which resounded through the silent valley. During so many ages their ancestors had observed the stars, prayed, and sung. Now all their desires were satisfied; they sang as if intoxicated with joy and gratitude.

“In the meantime Joseph, with the assistance of two aged shepherds, had prepared a little repast in the tent of the three Kings. They brought bread, fruit, honey-comb, herbs, and small bottles of balm, which they arranged on a small low table, covered with a

cloth. Joseph had procured all this in the morning, to receive the Kings, whose arrival the Blessed Virgin had already told him to expect. When they retired to their tent, I saw St. Joseph receive them in a very friendly manner, and entreat them, as his guests to accept the little repast which he offered. He stood by their side near the table, and they partook of the entertainment. He did not shew any timidity; he was so glad that he shed tears of joy.

“When I saw this, I thought of my late father, the poor countryman, who on my coming into the convent was obliged to sit at table with many persons of distinction. In his simplicity and humility he experienced at first great fear; but later on his gladness was so great that he wept for joy; he held without wishing for it the first place at the feast. After this little repast Joseph left them. Some of the most important persons of the caravan went to an inn in Bethlehem; others placed themselves on their couches, which

were ranged in a circle in the large tent, and gave themselves up to sleep.

“Joseph returned to the grotto, placed all the presents at the right side of the Crib in a recess, before which he had placed a screen, so that no one could see what was there. The servant of St. Anne, who after the departure of her mistress had remained with the Blessed Virgin, stayed in a side grotto during the ceremony. She was sedate and intelligent. I saw neither the Holy Family nor even this servant regard the presents of the Kings with a worldly complaisance; everything was accepted with humble thanks, and very soon charitably distributed.

“This evening, at Bethlehem, I saw a little excitement on the arrival of the cortége at the house where the tax was paid. Later many visits to and from the city. The people who had followed the cortége as far as the valley of the shepherds had returned without delay.

“Later on, whilst the three Kings with joy

and fervour adored and placed their presents in the grotto of the Crib, I saw, prowling about the neighbourhood and at a certain distance, some Jews, who spied and whispered together; later I saw them go to Bethlehem, and make various reports. I could not help weeping bitterly for these wretched men, who then, and even now, when the Saviour approaches near, keep murmuring and observing, then, driven by malice, spread about lies. Oh, how these wretches are to be pitied! They have salvation so near them, and they reject it; whilst the good Kings, guided by the sincere faith in the promise, are come from so great a distance, and have found salvation. Oh, how I wept for these hard-hearted and blind men!

“At Jerusalem, to-day, I saw Herod read again the scrolls with many of the scribes, and talk of what they had heard the three Kings say; afterwards everything was quiet, as if they wished to hush the matter up.”

THE KINGS AGAIN VISIT THE HOLY FAMILY.

HEROD PREPARES SNARES FOR THEM. AN
ANGEL WARNS THEM. THEY TAKE THEIR
LEAVE AND DEPART.

“Monday, December 24.—Early to-day I saw the Kings and some persons of their company visit in turn the Holy Family. I saw them, also, during the day, near their tents, and their beasts of burden, engaged in several distributions; they were full of joy and happiness, and made numerous presents. I saw that they always acted thus on the occurrence of joyful occasions. The shepherds, who had rendered services to the retinue of the three Kings, received considerable gifts. I saw them also give alms to many poor people: thus, they placed cloaks on the shoulders of several poor old women, bent with age, who were standing near. There were many persons belonging to the company.

who were pleased with the valley near the shepherds, and who wished to stay and join these shepherds; they made their wish known to the three Kings, and received permission to remain, with rich presents. They gave them rugs, goods, gold in grains, and the asses which they had ridden. When I saw the Kings distribute so much bread, I asked myself how they could have procured it. I then remembered to have often seen them, in places where they encamped, prepare from their stock of flour in the iron moulds which they carried with them, small flat loaves like biscuits, which they placed on their beasts of burden, packed together in light boxes of leather. To-day, also, there came many people from Bethlehem, who pressed round them to get presents, and who on divers pretexts made them give something.

“This evening they went to the Crib to bid good-bye. Mensor went first alone. Mary placed the Infant Jesus in his arms. He wept, and was radiant with joy. After him

came the two others, who took leave with tears in their eyes; they brought more presents still, several pieces of stuff, of which some seemed to be of undyed silk, while others were red or flowered; there were also beautiful rugs. They wished, too, to leave their large mantles of pale yellow, which seemed to be made of extremely fine wool; these were very light, stirred by the least breath of air. They brought, also, many cups placed one within the other, boxes full of berries, and, in a basket, pots with beautiful bunches of a green plant with elegant white flowers. These pots were placed one over the other in a basket; it was myrrh. They gave also to Joseph large cages containing birds, of which they had a large number, for eating, on their dromedaries.

“All shed many tears when they parted with Mary and the Child. I saw the Blessed Virgin standing near them when they took leave. She carried on her arm the Infant Jesus covered with her veil, and she stepped

some paces in advance to conduct the Kings towards the door of the grotto. She then stood still, and to give a souvenir to these excellent men, she detached from her head, the large veil of yellow transparent stuff which encircled her as well as the Infant Jesus, and she gave it to Mensor. They received it bowing low, and a respectful joy swelled their hearts when they saw before them unveiled the Blessed Virgin holding the Infant Jesus. What sweet tears did they not shed when quitting the grotto! The veil from this time became to them the most sacred relic which they possessed.

“The Blessed Virgin in receiving these presents did not seem to attach any value to the things which they offered. Nevertheless in her touching humility she shewed true gratitude to the giver. During this marvellous visit I did not see in her any sentiment of esteem of herself. Only at the commencement through love for the Infant Jesus, and through compassion for St. Joseph

she allowed herself in all simplicity to hope that now, perhaps, they would find some sympathy at Bethlehem, and not be treated in a manner so contemptuous as they experienced on their arrival; for the grief and confusion of St. Joseph had caused her much trouble.

“When the Kings took leave, the lamp was already lighted in the grotto; it was getting dusk, and they soon assembled with their followers under the large fir-tree which rose above the tomb of Maraha, to perform, as on yesterday eve, the ceremonies of their worship. A lamp was lighted under the tree. As soon as the stars appeared, they prayed and intoned their melodious chants. The voices of the children gave a most pleasing effect in the choir. They returned afterwards to their tent, where St. Joseph had again prepared for them a small repast, after which some of them returned to their Inn at Bethlehem, while many gave themselves up to repose in the tents.

“Towards midnight I had all at once a

vision. I saw the Kings reposing in their tents on rugs spread over the ground, and I perceived near them a young man shining with light. It was an Angel, who awoke them, and told them to depart in all haste, and not to return by Jerusalem, but by the desert, going round by the Dead Sea.

"They quickly threw themselves from their couches, and their followers were soon afoot.

"One of them went to the Crib to awaken St. Joseph, who ran to Jerusalem to inform the others who were lodging there; but they met them before reaching Bethlehem, for they had seen the same apparition.

"The tent was folded, the baggage was loaded, and all cleared off with an astonishing rapidity. Whilst the Kings were still making their touching farewell to St. Joseph before the grotto of the Crib, their retinue departed in separate parties to take the lead, and direct their steps towards the south, so as to go by the Dead Sea, traversing the desert of Engaddi. The Kings were most pressing for the Holy

Family to go with them, as danger certainly awaited them; they then asked that Mary should conceal herself with the little Jesus, that she might not be disturbed on account of them. They wept like children, embraced St. Joseph, and addressed him in touching words; they then mounted their lightly-burdened dromedaries, and departed across the desert.

“I saw an angel near them in the plain; he shewed them the direction of the road. They soon disappeared. They followed routes separated a quarter of a league from each other, going during the first league towards the east, and then towards the south in the desert. They passed by the country which Jesus traversed in returning from Egypt in the third year of His ministry.

MEASURES TAKEN BY THE AUTHORITIES AGAINST
THE KINGS. ACCESS TO THE GROTTA OF
THE CRIB FORBIDDEN. ZACHARY VISITS
THE HOLY FAMILY.

"Tuesday, December 25.—The angel had advised the Kings at the right moment, for the authorities of Bethlehem had formed the design of arresting them on this day, of imprisoning them in the deep cells which were under the Synagogue, and of accusing them before Herod as disturbers of the public peace.

"I know not whether they had a secret order from Herod to this effect; I believe rather it was a spontaneous movement of zeal. This morning, when their departure became known in Bethlehem, they were already near to Engaddi. The valley where they had encamped was quiet and solitary as before their visit, and there were no traces of them left except the soiled grass and some stakes

which they had used for their tents. In truth, however the appearance of the caravan had produced a great impression in Bethlehem. Many people repented of not having shown hospitality to St. Joseph ; others spoke of the Kings as adventurers, led by strange imaginations ; others again saw a connection between their arrival and the reports of the apparition manifested to the shepherds. All these discussions led the magistrates of the place, perhaps on the suggestion of Herod, to take certain precautions. I saw all the inhabitants called together in the centre of Bethlehem, in a place where there was a well surrounded by trees, and before a large house, to which many steps led up. An announcement in proclamation was read, directed against superstitious talk, and prohibiting visits to the dwelling of those who had excited all these rumours.

“When the crowd thus assembled had retired, I saw St. Joseph summoned to the same house and interrogated by aged Jews.

I saw him return to the Crib, and then return to the tribunal. The second time he took with him a little of the gold which the Kings had brought, and gave it to them, after which they let him go quietly away. All this enquiry seemed to me to border on burlesque. I saw also the authorities barricade, by throwing across it the trunk of a tree, the road leading to the neighbourhood of the Crib, but which without passing by the gate of the city, went by the spot where Mary had stayed under a large tree, and passed round a mound or rampart. They placed a sentinel in a tent near the tree, and stretched across the way cords which were fastened to a bell in the hut, in order that they might stop those who were going in that direction.

"In the afternoon I saw a troop of sixteen soldiers belonging to Herod, near St. Joseph, with whom they conversed. They had probably been sent because of the three Kings, who had been accused of troubling the public peace, but, as silence and repose reigned around,

and they found only a poor family in the grotto, and as, moreover, they had orders not to attract attention, they quietly returned, and reported what they had seen. Joseph had carried the presents of the three Kings, and whatever else they had left behind them to the grotto of Maraha and the three caves concealed under the hill of the Crib, which he had known since his youth, from often having fled there to avoid the persecution of his brothers. These solitary caves had existed from the time of the patriarch Jacob, at a time when there were only cottages in the place where Bethlehem now stood. He had on one occasion pitched his tents on the hill of the Crib. This evening I saw Zachary of Hebron visit the Holy Family for the first time. Mary was still in the grotto. He shed tears of joy, took the child in his arms, and repeated with some alteration the hymn of praise which he had sung at the circumcision of John the Baptist.

“ Wednesday, December 26.—To-day Zachary

returned home, and St. Anne returned near the Holy Family with her elder daughter. The elder daughter of St. Anne was taller than her mother, and appeared nearly as old.

“Great joy now reigned in the Holy Family. Anne was thoroughly happy; Mary frequently placed the Infant Jesus in her arms to be taken care of. I have never seen her do this for any other person. I saw—and this affected me very much,—that the hair of the Child, which was fair and curly, had at the end of the hairs rays of light. I think that they curled His hair, for I saw that they rubbed His little head when they washed it, and in doing so they put on Him a little cloak.

“I saw always in the Holy Family a pious and touching veneration for the Infant Jesus; but every thing was done simply and naturally, as is usual with the chosen Saints of God. The Child had an affection and tenderness for His Mother, which I have never elsewhere seen in children so young.

“Mary related to her mother everything that had passed during the visit of the three Kings, and Anne was deeply affected that the Lord had called these men from so far off to let them know the Child of promise. She saw the presents of the Kings, which were concealed in a hole made in the wall. She assisted in distributing a great part, and arranging the rest in order. Everything in the neighbourhood remained quiet; the roads leading to the grotto which did not pass by the gate of the city were barred by order of the magistrates. Joseph did not go to Bethlehem to make any purchases. The shepherds brought everything of which he had need. The relative to whose house Anne had gone in the tribe of Benjamin was Mara, the daughter of Rhode, sister of Elizabeth. She was poor, and subsequently had many sons who were disciples of Jesus; one of them, named Nathaniel, was the bridegroom at the marriage in Cana. This Mara was present at the death of the Blessed Virgin at Ephesus.

"Anne was now alone with Mary in the side-grotto. I saw them work together at a large quilt. The grotto of the Crib was entirely empty. Joseph's ass was hidden behind the screen. To-day the agents of Herod came again to Bethlehem, and obtained information from several houses as to a new-born Child. They especially directed their enquiries to a Jewess of distinction, who a short time before had given birth to a male child. They did not come to the grotto of the Crib; as they had before only found a poor family, they supposed there need be no enquiry about them.

"Two old men (I believe of those shepherds who had adored the Infant Jesus) came to look for St. Joseph, and to warn him about these enquiries. I then saw the Holy Family and St. Anne take refuge with the Child in the grotto of the tomb of Maraha. In the grotto of the Crib there was nothing to shew that it was inhabited; it seemed entirely abandoned. I saw them during the night.

follow the valley with a lantern. Anne carried the Infant Jesus in her arms; Mary and Joseph walked by her side, carrying rugs and everything necessary for the holy women and Child. I had on this occasion a vision, and I know not if the Holy Family had not the same; I saw round the Infant Jesus a nimbus formed by seven figures of angels placed one above the other; many other figures appeared on this nimbus. I saw also near St. Anne, Joseph, and Mary, luminous forms which seemed to lead them by the hand. When they had entered into the vestibule they shut the door, and went into the grotto of the tomb, where they arranged everything for taking their rest."

THE HOLY FAMILY IN THE GROTTA OF MARAHA.

JOSEPH FOR SOME HOURS SEPARATES THE
INFANT JESUS FROM MARY. MARY IN
HER ANXIETY PRESSES SOME MILK FROM
HER BREAST. ORIGIN OF A MIRACLE WHICH
HAS REACHED OUR OWN TIMES.

Sister Emmerich recounted at different times the two following incidents as having taken place when the Blessed Virgin was concealed in the grotto of Maraha. Having continually been distracted by suffering or by visits, she did not relate them on the day on which she saw them, but by way of supplement, as of something that she had forgotten; but we place them together, leaving to the reader to arrange them in such other order as he may think fit.

"The Blessed Virgin related to her mother everything that had passed since the visit of the holy Kings, and they spoke also of the

manner in which she had been left in the grotto of the tomb of Maraha.

"I saw two shepherds come to the Blessed Virgin, and warn her that certain persons were coming, commissioned by the magistrates to enquire after her Child.

"Mary experienced great anxiety, and I saw, soon afterwards, St. Joseph enter, take the Infant Jesus in his arms, wrap Him up in a cloak, and carry Him away. I do not remember to what place he carried Him.

"I then saw the Blessed Virgin, filled with maternal anxiety, remain in the grotto without the Infant Jesus for the space of half a day. When the time came at which it was necessary to suckle the Infant, she did what careful mothers are accustomed to do when they have been violently excited by fear, or strong emotion: before giving the Infant the breast, she pressed from it some of the milk, which her anxiety had slightly changed, into a little cavity of the white stone seat which there was in the grotto. She spoke of this,

precaution which she had taken to one of the shepherds, a pious and thoughtful man, who had come to find her (probably to lead her to the Infant). This man, profoundly convinced of the sanctity of the Mother of the Redeemer, collected afterwards with care the virginal milk, which remained in a small cavity of the stone, and carried it, with a simplicity full of faith, to his wife, who had then a child at the breast, and which she could not nurse or pacify.

“This good woman took this sacred food with reverend confidence, and her faith was rewarded; for her milk became thenceforth very plentiful. After this event the white stone of the grotto received a similar virtue, and I have seen, even in our own times, the infidel Mahomedans make use of it as a remedy in similar cases and many others.*

* The tradition of this miracle is related in different ways in many ancient and modern descriptions of Palestine. According to the most ordinary tradition, the Holy Family, passing through Bethlehem on the flight into Egypt, were concealed in the grotto, and

“From this time the earth of the grotto, steeped in water, and pressed into little moulds, has been spread through Christendom

some drops of milk, fallen from the breast of the Mother of God, had given this virtue to the stone of the grotto. It was Sister Kummerich who was the first to say that this grotto had served as the tomb of the nurse of Abraham, and that it was called from that “the grotto of the nurse;” —as also, that the motherly anxieties of Mary had been the cause of the virtue communicated to the stone of this grotto.

The learned Franciscan, Quaresmius, Apostolic Commissioner to the Holy Land in the seventeenth century, says, amongst other things, in reference to this grotto, in his *Historiæ Terræ Sanctæ Elucidatio* (Antwerpiae, 1632; vol. 2, page 678): “A little distance from the grotto of the Nativity and the church of the Blessed Virgin at Bethlehem, (following other indications, distant about two hundred paces) there is a cavern in which have been made three grottoes; in the middle one the holy Sacrifice of the Mass is frequently celebrated in commemoration of a miracle which took place here. It is called the grotto of the Virgin, or the Church of St. Nicholas. A Bull of Pope Gregory IX, who died in 1378, mentions this Chapel of St. Nicholas at Bethlehem, and permits the Franciscans to build here a house with a belfry and cemetery.” It is recorded in old

as an object of devotion, and it is this which composes the relics called 'Milk of the Blessed Virgin.'

manuscripts about the holy places: "Also the Church of St. Nicholas, where is the grotto in which, according to the tradition, the Blessed Virgin was concealed with the Infant Jesus." Quaresmius, after having related the common tradition as to this grotto, adds that the earth of this grotto is naturally red; but after having been reduced to a powder, and washed and dried in the sun, it becomes white as snow; and that, when mixed with water, it looks just like milk. The earth so prepared is called "Milk of the Blessed Virgin." Of this a very salutary drink is made for women who cannot suckle their children, and which is employed with success against other maladies. Even Turkish and Arabian women take away such a great quantity of earth to use in this manner, that this, which was formerly only one grotto, now forms three. Those relics which in many places of pilgrimage bear the name of milk of the Blessed Virgin, and give rise to so many scoffs, are only the earth of this grotto at Bethlehem, of which Sister Emmerich speaks.

Quaresmius, referring to this, mentions a miracle reported by Baronius, who says in his *Annals*, (A.D. 158), that since St. Paul cast off the viper which had bit his hand, in the island of Malta, there have been no more serpents or venomous

animals in the island, and even that the earth of Malta is a cure against poison. He then adds these words: "If such a virtue has been given to this earth because of St. Paul, why should we refuse to believe that God, to honour the Virgin Mother, has communicated a similar and even greater virtue to this grotto, sanctified by the presence of Jesus and Mary. Castro in his *Life of Mary*, and Grotonus in his *Life of St. Joseph*, relate the same tradition after an old Armenian manuscript.

PREPARATIONS FOR THE DEPARTURE OF THE
HOLY FAMILY. DEPARTURE OF ST. ANNE
PERSONAL DETAILS OF THE SISTER. SHE
RECOGNISES SOME RELICS OF THE THREE
KINGS.

"December 28-30.—I saw during the days just past, and to-day, St. Joseph make various arrangements, which indicated the approaching departure of the Holy Family. He diminished every day their moveable property. He gave to the shepherds the partitions, the screens and other articles, which had rendered the grotto habitable, and these things were all carried away by them.

"To-day, in the afternoon, a considerable number of people, who were going to Bethlehem for the Sabbath, came to the grotto of the Crib; but, finding it abandoned, they passed on. St. Anne was intending to return to Nazareth after the Sabbath. Everything was

put in order and made into packets. She took with her, and carried upon two asses, many things given by the three Kings, especially large rugs and pieces of cloth. This evening, the Holy Family celebrated the Sabbath in the grotto of Maraha; they continued to celebrate it on Saturday the 29th of December. Tranquillity reigned in the neighbourhood. After the close of the Sabbath everything was prepared for the departure of St. Anne. On this night I saw for the second time the Blessed Virgin go out in the darkness from the grotto of Maraha, and carry the Infant Jesus into that of the Crib. She placed Him upon a rug in the spot where He was born, and prayed, kneeling down close to Him. I saw all the grotto filled with a heavenly light, as at the hour of the birth of Our Lord. I think that the Holy Mother of God must have seen it also.

"Sunday, December 30.—Very early this morning, I saw St. Anne bid most tender farewell to the Holy Family and the three

shepherds, and depart for Nazareth with her servants.

"They carried on their beasts all that remained of the presents of the three Kings; and I was much surprised to see them take a small packet that belonged to me. I had the feeling that it was amongst theirs, and I could not understand how it came to pass that St. Anne should carry also something of mine."

This impression which Sister Emmerich had is explained by what will be shortly related. Soon after this movement of surprise which she had on seeing St. Anne carry from Bethlehem something belonging to her, she communicated what follows to the writer.

"St. Anne," she said "at her departure, carried away many things which had been given by the Kings, and especially pieces of cloth. A large part of this was preserved in the primitive Church, and some portion has remained to our times. There is amongst my

relics* a small portion of the cover of the little table on which were placed the presents of the three Kings, and a small portion of one of their cloaks. As a part of these relics

* On this expression "my relics" we have some details to give the reader. At all epochs, there have been in the Catholic Church persons who, by virtue of a singular gift, have experienced a lively and agreeable impression at the sight of or contact with the bones of the Saints, and all objects consecrated and sanctified. Probably, this gift has never been manifested in so high a degree or so constantly as in Sister Anne Catherine Emmerich. Not only the Blessed Sacrament, but also everything which had been consecrated and blessed by the Church, and especially the bones of the Saints, and everything which the Church intends by the name of relics, were distinguished by her from all other substances of the like nature. These sacred objects appeared to her shining with a light of a different colour according to their kind. When they were the bones of Saints, or stuffs which had belonged to them, she could give the names of the Saints, and often recount their history with every detail.

It thus came to pass that persons who came to her most frequently were convinced of this by a large number of daily experiences, and one of her friends gave her the name of "Sacrometer."

He who writes this relates in the detailed history

were placed in a small cupboard near the bed of the invalid, whilst another part were in the home of the writer, he enquired, "Is the relic here?" "No," she replied, "below in the house." "Have I got it?" said the writer.

of her life a great number of these experiences. We know not if the ecclesiastical authorities of the country where Sister Emmerich lived have made an extended report, with all the witnesses in support of this phenomenon, so interesting in connection with the spiritual life; but we are convinced that this gift was in her most remarkable and most worthy of attention. To prove this knowledge which she had of relics and other consecrated objects, many of her friends, and especially the writer, placed within the reach of the good Sister a large number of objects of this kind. This had been easily done, for unfortunately, in consequence of the destruction of so many churches and convents in our times, and also in consequence of the diminution, or even complete extinction, of the sentiment of faith in everything that concerns holy things and objects handed down by tradition as sacred and venerable, treasures in honour of which great churches have perhaps been built were neglected and profaned in the most distressing manner; many had fallen into private hands, and even into the shops of dealers in fancy articles. She herself pointed out what had

"No," she said, "it is in the possession of the man who lives with the pilgrim [she was accustomed thus to call the writer]; it will be found in a little parcel; the small piece of a mantle is of a faded colour. You will not believe me; it is true, nevertheless; I see it before your eyes. He is a near relation of the writer's—he who paid me a visit. He has a heart like that of the dark King—he is so sweet, so childlike, so sincere. Oh, if that man were in the Church, he would possess heaven on earth."

The writer having taken from among the relics placed near him that which might be regarded as a little packet, and having brought it to her, she opened it immediately, and recognised a small bit of cloth of yellow wool, and another bit of red silk, as coming

become of these secret bones, and they were procured for her. She received, also, thanks to the kindness of the venerable Overberg, who was her extraordinary director, two important reliquaries, full of the relics of primitive times, which had been found in an old suppressed church.

from the three Kings, but without giving any exact explanation. She afterwards remarked:

“I ought myself to have a small piece of cloth coming from the three Magi Kings. They had several mantles—one which was thick and of close-knit stuff for rough weather; another of a yellow colour; and another red, of very fine wool. These cloaks floated in the wind as they walked. In their ceremonies they wore cloaks of silk, without colour; the borders were embroidered with gold, and they had a long train supported by train-bearers. I believe that I have near me a piece of one of these mantles, and it is because of this that I have seen near the three Kings, before and during this night, scenes relating to the cultivation and weaving of silk.

“In a country situated in the east, between the country of Theokeno and that of Sair, there are trees whose branches are covered with worms. A small ditch has been made round each tree, to prevent the worms getting away. Little boxes hung on the trees, and,

as they took out of them little round things, more than an inch long, I thought at first that they were the eggs of a rare species of bird. But I soon found out that they were the cocoons spun by the worms. As the people wound them and drew out very thin threads, they placed a large quantity before their breasts, and spun them into a beautiful thread, and rolled them round something which they had in their hands. I saw them, also, spin between the trees. Their manner of weaving was very simple. The piece of stuff was a little larger than my bed-cover."

Some days afterwards she said : "My doctor has frequently asked me about a small bit of stuff made of silk of singular texture. I have lately seen a similar piece near me, and I do not know what has become of it. On recalling things to memory, I recollect it was on this occasion that I saw the picture of this weaving of silk. It was to the east of the country of the three Kings, in a country visited by St. Thomas. I am mistaken in

what I have said. The pilgrim must obliterate that. It was given me by some one who wished to try me, without troubling himself about what then occupied my mind. From this has resulted confusion, and everything has been obscured.

"I have again seen the relics, and I know whence they come. Some years since I gave to my sister-in-law, who lives at Flamske, before her last confinement, a small parcel fastened by stitches. She had asked me to give her a relic to strengthen her. I gave her this little parcel, which I had seen shining, and which had been at one time in contact with the Mother of God. I do not remember if I saw clearly what it contained, but it brought much consolation to this pious woman. To-night, I have seen it again; she has it still; it is firmly fastened up. There is a small piece of dark red cloth, two small pieces of a light fabric, like crape, of the colour of raw silk, something green resembling cotton, a small piece of wood, and two small

fragments of white stone. I have told my sister-in-law to return them."

A few days later her sister-in-law came to see her, and brought the small packet in question, which was a little larger than the size of a nut. The writer opened it, with care, in his own house, separated the small bits of stuff, which were rolled together, and placed them between the leaves of a book to straighten them. There was a small piece of woollen stuff, very thick, about two inches square, of a red colour approaching to brown; pieces about two inches square of light stuff, like muslin, and of which the colour was that of raw silk, and also a small chip of wood, and two small fragments of stone. Having folded the small pieces of stuff between sheets of letter-paper, he placed them before her eyes in the evening. She did not know what it was, and said at once, "What have I to do with these letters?" Then, taking the papers in her hand without opening them, she immediately added, "This must be taken the

greatest care of, and not a particle must be lost. The thick stuff, which now seems brown, was formerly of a dark red. It was a rug, nearly as large as my room. The followers of the three Kings spread it in the grotto of the Crib, and Mary sat upon it with the Infant Jesus, while they offered incense. She took care of it afterwards in the grotto, and took it with her upon the ass when she returned to Jerusalem to present the Child in the Temple. The light fabric comes from a kind of short mantle, composed of three separate pieces of stuff, which they wore fastened at the neck on their shoulders, like a stole, on occasions of ceremony. The small chip of wood and the two little stones have been brought from the Holy Land at a more recent period."

She was then occupied with a continuation of the visions relating to the second year of the ministry of Jesus. On the 27th of January which preceded His passion, she saw him go to Bethany and stay with seventeen

of His disciples at an inn of Bethlehem. He instructed them in their vocation, and celebrated the Sabbath with them. "The lamp remained lighted all the day. There is one of his disciples who recently came with Him from Sichar. I have seen him most distinctly. There ought to be among my relics a small fragment of his bones. His name resembles Selan, or Vilan; those two letters were in it." Shortly afterwards she added: "I have seen again the little bit of stuff which comes from the three Kings. There should be also there a little packet, in which, amongst other things, is a small piece of the mantle of King Mensor, a small piece of the covering of red silk which was placed in ancient times near the Holy Sepulchre, and a small portion of the white and red stole of a Saint." After a pause she continued: "I now see where this little parcel is. I gave it two years and a half ago to a woman of this place to wear herself. She has it still. I gave it to her to console her when they put

me in prison, on account of the great interest she took in me. I did not know then exactly what it was ; I only saw that it was shining, that it was a relic, and that it had been in contact with the Mother of God. Now that I have seen more in detail everything that concerns the three Kings, I recognise all that about me which has any reference to them, and especially these relics of cloth."

After some days had elapsed, when she again had this little parcel, she gave it to the writer to open, as she was unwell. He opened in the adjoining room this little parcel, which a long time ago had been strongly sewn together, and there found the following objects :—

1. A small piece of the texture of fine wool, undyed, which, when an attempt was made to open it, divided into very thin pieces.
2. Two small bits of cotton stuff, of a nankin colour, of not very close, but still firm texture, about an inch in length.

3. A piece of silk stuff, an inch square, of crimson colour.

4. A piece of silk stuff about a quarter of an inch square, yellow and white.

5. A small piece of green and brown silk.

6. In the midst of all this, a small folded paper, containing a little white stone of the size of a pea.

The writer separated all these objects, folded them in fresh small pieces of paper, except the sixth, which he kept in the old paper. When he came near the invalid, she did not appear to be in a state of clairvoyance. She was wide awake and coughing. She complained of her great pains. Yet she said presently: "What are those letters which you have there? They are all shining. We have there treasures of more worth than a kingdom." She then took hold of the different papers without opening them, and without looking to see what they contained. After having held them one after another in her hand, she was silent for a few moments, as if looking within

herself; then, returning them, she spoke as follows as to their contents, without making the slightest error; for the writer satisfied himself of this immediately, by opening the papers, which were all folded in the same manner.

No. 1. "This comes from a robe of Mensor. It is of very fine wool. It had no sleeves, but only openings through which to pass the arms. A piece of stuff, like a sleeve, hung from the shoulders to the knees." She then described exactly the shape, the material, and the colour of the relic.

No. 2. "This comes from a mantle which the three Kings had left behind them." She then described the relic.

No. 3. "This is a small piece of carpet of red silk, which was spread over the floor near the Holy Sepulchre, when the Christians were in possession of Jerusalem. When the Turks took the city, it was quite new. The knights divided it amongst them, and each carried away a small piece as a souyenir."

No. 4. "This comes from the stole of a very holy priest named Alexis. The Turks made him undergo much ill-treatment. They brought horses into the church, and placed an old Turkish woman between him and the Holy Sepulchre, in the place where he prayed; but he did not suffer himself to be troubled by that. They ended by walling him up, and the woman gave him bread and water through an opening. I know this from many things which have been recently revealed to me, when I have seen this little parcel without knowing where it was."

No. 5. "This is not a relic. It is, however, an object worthy of respect; it comes from the seats where the princes and knights sat in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre."

No. 6. "This is a small stone from the chapel which stands above the Holy Sepulchre. There is also a small fragment of bone from the disciple Silvain of Sichar."

The writer having said that there was no fragment of bone, she said, "Look and see."

He then went into the adjoining room to see more clearly, opened with great care the folded paper, and found within a fold a small piece of bone of irregular form, of the thickness of a finger nail, and of very small size. She had exactly described it, and he recognised it at once. All this took place in the evening in her room. There was not so much light as in the first room.

THE END.

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